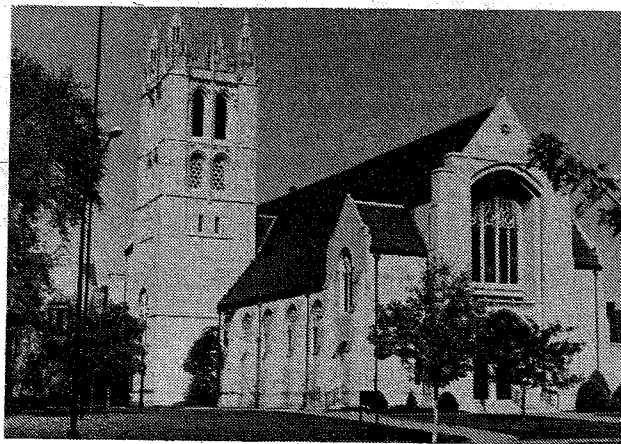
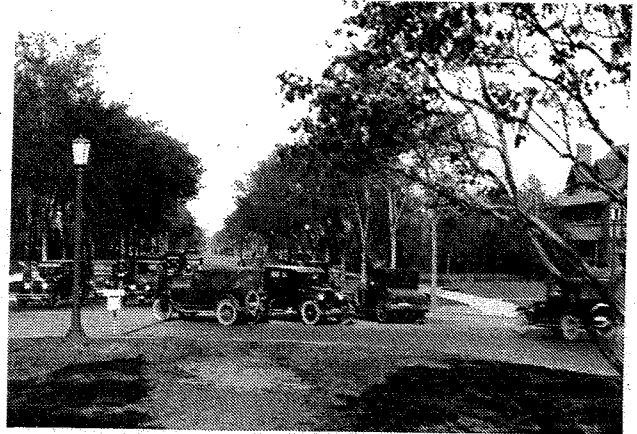


SUMMIT AVENUE PLAN

SEPTEMBER 1986



DIVISION OF PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF SAINT PAUL
CITY HALL ANNEX
25 WEST FOURTH STREET, SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA, 55102

SUMMIT AVENUE PLAN

Adopted as part of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan

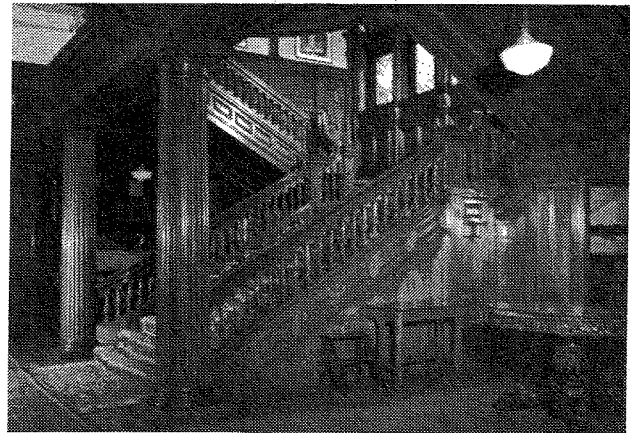
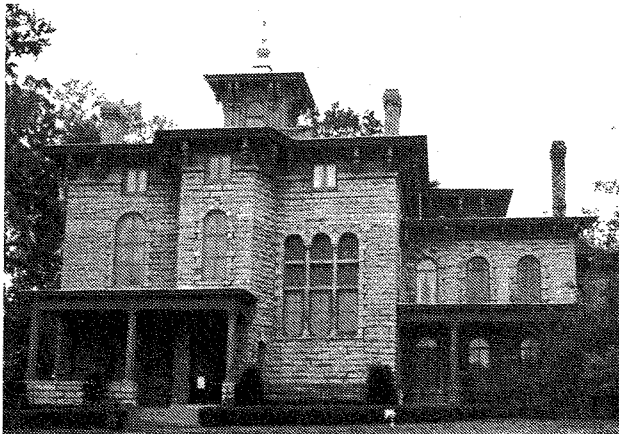
Planning Commission 5/23/86

City Council 9/9/86

SUMMIT AVENUE PLAN

Adopted by Saint Paul Planning Commission 5/23/86

Adopted by Saint Paul City Council 9/9/86



SUMMARY

Purpose

In the past five years, there have been a series of controversies along Summit Avenue, particularly about the use of mansions and about parking for the College of St. Thomas and William Mitchell College of Law. In March, 1985, the City Council asked the Planning Commission to establish a representative planning committee and develop a plan for Summit Avenue.

Major Findings

1. Summit Avenue remains a city and regional treasure of history and architecture which is enjoyed daily by residents of the city's west central neighborhoods. Ernest Sandeen, former Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission Chairman, wrote in his book, "...Summit Avenue stands as the best-preserved American example of the Victorian monumental residential boulevard."
2. Summit Avenue is the strongest spoke in the parkway network and is heavily used for walking, jogging, bicycling, and

pleasure driving. With the loss of the elm canopy, a new and more diverse parkway character is being created according to the City's Street Tree Master Plan and the landscape plan for the Summit Avenue median.

3. While western Summit Avenue has been predominantly a stable, high-priced single-family area, lower (or eastern) Summit has been through cycles of neighborhood change. It is currently on the upswing. Between 1974 and 1985, the percentage of properties in residential use with four or fewer housing units (conforming to RT-2 zoning) increased from 61 percent to 70 percent.

4. The real estate market is quite strong along most of western and central Summit Avenue. The mansions of lower Summit Avenue are part of a specialized real estate market with fewer potential buyers and longer average listing periods than the general housing market. The market appears weakest across from the College of St. Thomas.

5. Parking is a serious neighborhood problem around St. Thomas, William Mitchell, the University Club, and the half-dozen mansions used for reception houses and institutions.

6. Homeowners and potential buyers on lower Summit Avenue are apprehensive that the City will permit new commercial or institutional uses in neighboring properties. This apprehension about the future residential integrity of the neighborhood is a more serious deterrent to potential buyers than purchase prices or maintenance costs. If people are confident the City will preserve and enhance the residential character of the avenue, they will be much more likely to buy and maintain properties for their residences.

Major Recommendations

1. The Heritage Preservation Commission should develop proposals to expand the Historic Hill District and to create a West Summit Avenue Preservation District with somewhat looser design controls. All of Summit Avenue should be protected against demolition and inappropriate new construction.

2. The City, through zoning policy and enforcement, should consistently protect the residential character of all of Summit Avenue. Institutions and quasi-commercial uses have, in many cases, subjected mansions to more wear and tear, created neighborhood parking and traffic problems, and inflated real estate prices, making residential development more difficult.

3. For bed and breakfasts and home occupations, the City can liberalize the Zoning Code without undermining the residential desirability of Summit Avenue.

a. The current planning staff proposal to permit bed and breakfast, (which requires owner occupancy and permits one "B and B" unit in single family zones and up to

five "B and B" units in multi-family zones) is acceptable if lot size requirements are increased, spacing standards between "B and B's" are added, registration with the city is required, owner occupancy is strictly defined, the number of "B and B" units in multi-family zones is lowered to four, and "B and B's" are permitted in large multi-family residences in multi-family zones.

b. The home occupation rules in the Zoning Code, which now allow only one employee from outside the home, should be changed to allow two outside employees in very large homes (over 4,000 square feet). In any home occupation, the business use of the house is required to be secondary and incidental to the residential use.

4. The existing City housing inspection program should be used to ensure that housing maintenance is never neglected to the point of jeopardizing the long-run soundness of any large, old Summit Avenue house.

5. Although the Summit Avenue Planning Committee opposes construction of a large parking lot at William Mitchell College of Law, the Planning Commission approves the lot because the lot is a practical solution to parking problems in the area and because the City has no legal basis for denying it.

6. For parking at the College of St. Thomas, the Planning Commission and City Council should follow through on the process set up in the College Zoning Study whereby the college and neighborhood agree on a plan and schedule for reducing the college's parking deficit.

7. The Parks and Recreation Division should improve the landscaping for the Summit Avenue median, should intensify landscaping at the Short Line bridge and should support two extra trimmings for young Summit Avenue trees to be paid by assessments.

8. District Councils along Summit Avenue should advocate the extra tree trimmings by assessment and should speed up tree replacement by promoting the existing program for sharing tree planting costs between residents and the City.

9. The Public Works Department should replace the worn-out sidewalks on lower Summit Avenue with new sidewalks scored in two-foot squares to resemble the old tile sidewalks. Public Works should also remove lane striping west of Lexington (except at the stop signals) to improve bicycle safety and should support aesthetic upgrading of the Short Line bridge.

10. The Planning Division should establish an interdepartmental staff network to coordinate implementation of this plan. Members of the Summit Avenue Planning Committee should survey residents to explore interest in a new citizen organization for Summit Avenue. College/community relations committees for St. Thomas and Macalester College should continue to meet, and a similar group should be formed for William Mitchell College of Law.

CHAPTERS

Plan Brief	1
Introduction	4
Goals	5
Historic Preservation	6
Housing	13
Institutions	22
Parkway	28
Organization	36
Action Plan	38
Appendices	42

APPENDICES

Land Use Trends	42
-----------------	----

Information on the following subjects was compiled during the writing of this plan and is available upon request from the Planning Division.

Current Land Use

Restricted Residence District

Average House Size

Heating and Utility Costs

Estimated Market Values
of Summit Avenue Homes

Street Tree Planting Plan

INTRODUCTION

In the past five years Summit Avenue has seen a series of controversies. Most of them were over the use of mansions--proposals for bed and breakfasts, catering and reception houses, offices, conference centers, and creation of additional apartments. There were also controversies about parking for the College of Saint Thomas and William Mitchell College of Law.

In 1984, the district councils along Summit Avenue asked the City to establish a planning committee for Summit Avenue. In March, 1985, the City Council passed a resolution requesting the Planning Commission to develop a Summit Avenue plan with the participation of an ad hoc advisory committee comprised of representatives from the neighborhoods and other groups interested in Summit Avenue.

Purpose of the Summit Avenue Plan

Among important Saint Paul landmarks, Summit Avenue ranks second only to the State Capitol. The purpose of this plan is to ensure the preservation of Summit Avenue as a grand residential boulevard to be enjoyed by future generations of Saint Paul citizens. The Avenue has had good decades and bad decades in the past and no doubt will be subject to changes in taste, housing demand, and economic cycles in the future. This plan evaluates the housing trends and economic forces affecting the

Avenue and, within this context, sets attainable goals for preserving and improving Summit Avenue through residential use.

The Planning Process

The Summit Avenue Planning Committee met over twenty times from May through December, 1985. Meetings were publicly announced and open to all interested persons. They were well attended and were often reported by neighborhood newspapers. To experience the avenue, the committee met in more than a dozen different churches, colleges, and homes along the avenue, from the James J. Hill House to the Saint Paul Seminary. The committee held a public hearing for Summit Avenue residents, toured houses, and heard panels of realtors, preservation architects, landscape designers, and church and college representatives. With only a few exceptions, the contents of this plan emerged through discussion and consensus.

Many of the recommendations in this plan require further legislative steps by the City such as the enactment of preservation districts and revisions in the zoning code. To allow time for the preparation of these changes, the Summit Avenue Planning Committee proposed a moratorium on building and zoning permits for certain activities until June of 1986, and the City Council agreed to impose the moratorium.

GOALS

1. Preserve the residential character of Summit Avenue.

For most of its history, Summit Avenue has been St. Paul's finest residential street. But parts of the avenue have been degraded by neighborhood decline, rooming houses, non-residential uses of mansions, and traffic problems. In the last decade the pendulum has begun to swing back. The City should nurture the new positive energy to maintain and improve Summit Avenue as a very desirable place to live.

2. Enhance Summit Avenue's role as the "showcase street" of St. Paul.

Summit Avenue is a symbol of St. Paul. St. Paul residents take their out-of-town guests down Summit Avenue to show off the city. People driving to work go out of their way to enjoy Summit Avenue. It is an important public purpose for the whole city that the buildings and public space on Summit Avenue be well maintained.

3. Preserve the historic architectural character of Summit Avenue.

Many of St. Paul's most historic buildings are on Summit Avenue and many prominent Minnesotans built houses and lived on Summit. Most people agree that the architecture of Summit Avenue should be preserved. Even though Summit Avenue is an old and established street, changes

still take place that improve or detract from the street. Since Summit Avenue embodies the heroic early period of our city's development, our generation should do its best to pass the avenue on intact to future generations.

4. Improve the quality of Summit Avenue's open space and parkway.

People use Summit Avenue for biking, jogging, walking or a Sunday afternoon drive. Their image of Summit Avenue as a grand boulevard is formed by the quality of its open space and landscaping as well as its houses. The open space sets the stage for the houses, and it should be of the same high quality as the houses.

5. Develop an organizational strategy for Summit Avenue residents and City staff to work together for ongoing improvement and advocacy for Summit Avenue.

Problems on Summit Avenue sometimes are not dealt with simply because it is hard to get the right people together to take action. Residents of Summit Avenue live in four different wards. Within City government, actions by zoning staff, building inspectors, traffic engineers, and city foresters - all working in different departments - are important for improving Summit Avenue. Their activities need to be coordinated to implement the Summit Avenue Plan.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Almost 30 years ago, St. Paul columnist Gareth Hiebert wrote "Were St. Paul likened to a tree, Summit would be its trunk; personify the city and Summit is the main artery, from which life flowed into the counting houses, the business marts." Hiebert went on to retell an old St. Paul saying "that one either lived north of Summit or south of Summit and the fortunate lived long it...."

The passage of time, along with the migration of the wealthy to the suburbs, has muted the force of these statements. However, the ideas that they represent are still prevalent today. Summit Avenue is rooted in the imagination of St. Paul residents as an avenue of stately mansions and it continues to be the city's most famous street.

While Summit Avenue's appeal today lies in its impressive homes and Victorian streetscape, its appeal was somewhat different for the resident of St. Paul around the turn of the century. A Summit address included one in the upper echelon of the entire midwest. So exclusive was the street that servants were required to use the alley rather than the avenue's sidewalks. From up on its bluff the residents of the towered mansions kept watch over the business, political and social life of the city. Important men such as

railroad baron James J. Hill, Senator Henry Rice, and transportation and insurance executive James Burbank boasted Summit Avenue addresses. During the late 19th century, most families in St. Paul probably had at least one member who worked for a Summit Avenue resident. A list of the Avenue's residents reveals names that still adorn companies, buildings, streets and schools.

The Growth of Summit Avenue

The first houses on Summit were constructed in 1855, three years before Minnesota became a state. Its earliest residents included Edward D. Neill, founder of House of Hope Church and later, Macalester College, as well as Henry M. Rice, territorial Congressman and later U.S. Senator. Despite these influential residents, the development of the avenue was slow, hampered by the inaccessibility of its bluff location and retarded by the Civil War and the panics of 1857 and 1873. By 1881 only 26 houses stood on the avenue. Of these, only three are still standing today. They are the David Stuart residence (312 Summit), built in 1858 and the oldest house still standing on Summit, the James Burbank house (432) and the A. G. Manson house (649).

Some Famous Summit Avenue Residents

Many prominent people have lived on Summit Avenue. The list below shows the profound relationship of Summit Avenue to local and state history. It presents individuals the Committee and staff learned of while writing this plan. Without doubt, many additional citizens deserve mention. To their relatives, the Committee apologizes that its research is incomplete.

1. James J. Hill
Railroad magnate. Lived at 240 Summit.
 2. Amherst H. Wilder
Pioneer businessman. Founded Wilder Foundation. Lived at 226 Summit (now razed).
 3. Edward D. Neill
Minister and historian. Founder of House of Hope Church and Macalester College. Lived at 242 Summit (now razed).
 4. Louis W. Hill
Businessman. Son of James J. Lived at 260 Summit.
 5. George Slade
Son-in-law of James J. Hill, businessman. Lived at 435 Summit (now razed).
 6. Dr. Egil Boeckman
Famed local doctor. Son-in-law of James J. Hill. Lived at 366 Summit.
 7. F. Scott Fitzgerald
Writer. Lived at 593 and 599 Summit.
 8. Sinclair Lewis
Writer. Lived (briefly) at 516 Summit.
 9. Warren Burger
U.S. Supreme Court - Chief Justice. Lived at 666 Summit.
 10. Pierce & Walter Butler
Lived in double house at 1345-47 Summit. Pierce was on the U.S. Supreme Court. Walter ran construction company which built the State Capitol.
 11. Frederick Weyerhaeuser
Founder of lumber empire. Lived at 266 Summit.
 12. Richards Gordon
Founder of Gordon & Ferguson Clothing Store. Lived at 245 and 378 Summit (now razed).
 13. Joseph Forepaugh
Built 302 Summit.
 14. Frederick K. Weyerhaeuser
Son of F. Weyerhaeuser. Lived at 294 Summit.
 15. Charles Schuneman
Owner of Schuneman Department Store (now a part of Dayton's). Lived at 275 Summit.
 16. William H. Lightner
Lawyer. Lightner Street is named after him. Lived at 318 & 322-24 Summit.
 17. Bernard Ridder
Founder of Knight-Ridder News Service. Live at 335 Summit.
 18. Lucius P. Ordway
3-M Executive. Lived at 400 Summit.
 19. I. A. O'Shaughnessy
Founder of local oil company. Lived at 1705 Summit.
 20. A.B. Stickney
Founder of South St. Paul Stockyards. Lived at 288 Summit (now razed).
 21. James C. Burbank
Founder of St. Paul Companies. Lived at 432 Summit.
 22. Gen. C.C. Andrews
Civil War General. Built 650 & 656 Summit.
 23. Adolph Bremer
Banker, political leader. Lived at 1344 Summit.
 24. Frank J. Waterous
Founder of Waterous Company--maker of fire hydrants. Lived at 1591 Summit.
 25. Henry M. Rice
U. S. Congressman & Senator. Lived at 285 & 288 Summit (now razed).
 26. Rush B. Wheeler
Lawyer, real estate spectator. Wheeler Street is named for him and his brother. Lived at 749 and 1376 Summit.
 27. Shreve Archer
Founder Archer, Daniels, Midland. Lived at 990 Summit.
 28. Howard Johnson
Early important executive at American Hoist & Derrick. Lived at 976 Summit.
 29. William R. Marshall
Minnesota Governor. Built 415 Summit.
 30. William A. Davern
Davern Street is named for him. Lived at 2064 Summit (now razed).
 31. Chauncey W. Griggs
Civil War hero (Battle of Vicksburg). Lumber and transportation executive. Built 476 Summit.
 32. Robert A. Smith
St. Paul Mayor. Lived at 312 Summit.
-

Architects of Note on Summit Avenue

1. Cass Gilbert
318, 339, 705, 505, 937, 943 Summit. Designed the Woolworth Building in New York City, the U.S. Supreme Court Building and the State Capitol.
2. Purcell, Feick & Elmslie
2022 Summit. Leading Prairie School Architects.
3. Eric Mendelsohn
Temple of Mt. Zion. Internationally famous architect. Designed Einstein Tower in Berlin.
4. Emmuanuel L. Masqueray
St. Paul Cathedral, St. Pauls-on-the-Hill. Designed the Basilica of St. Mary's in Minneapolis.
5. Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson
House of Hope, Ralph Cram, Chief Designer. Leading Gothic revivalists of the 20th century. Ralph Cram designed the Graduate School at Princeton.
6. Allen Stem
University Club, 340, 285, 929, 1003 Summit. Built Grand Central Station in New York City and St. Paul Hotel.
7. Thomas Holyoke
301, 500, 344, 952, 990 Summit. Design St. Paul Academy.
8. Clarence Johnston
490, 260, 807, 345, 1873, 1317 Summit. Designed Minnesota Historical Society and Northrup Auditorium.
9. Liebenberg & Kaplan
1923 Summit. Leading local practitioners of the Art Deco/Streamlined Moderne style.
10. Ellerbe-Round
590, 1950, 2241 Summit. Forerunners of present day Ellerbe & Associates.
11. William Channing Whitney
Governor's Mansion (1006 Summit). Designed Minneapolis Club and many houses in Minneapolis (Kenwood/Lowry Hill).
12. William Ingemann
828 Summit. Designed the Lowell Inn, Weyerhaeuser Library at Macalester, Master Plan for Gustavus Adolphus.
13. A.F. Gauger
243, 295, 301, 465, 525, 545 Summit. Popular St. Paul architect of the late 19th century.

It was not until the early 1880's that the avenue began to take on its present shape and status. From 1882 through 1886, 47 new homes were built on Summit. Many of Summit's finest and most famous houses were constructed during the booming 1880's: the Ordway house (400 Summit), the Shipman-Greve (415), the Griggs (476), the Foster (490), the Wilder (226 - now razed), and the Driscoll (266). During this period Summit, as well as the rest of the Hill district, was established as St. Paul's most fashionable neighborhood. According to Ernest Sandeen*, one resident wrote in 1887 that "Summit Avenue is justly the city's pride.... Its destiny is rapidly being fulfilled. Already the mansions of the moneyed men of St. Paul lift their imposing walls above its slopes of green. Each year

sees added residences, surpassing all before them...."

The years 1887 to 1906 saw 89 houses added to the avenue. It was a period of slower growth (only 4.9 houses constructed per year for the entire period compared to 9.2 houses for the 1882 - 1886 period). Yet it was also the era when men such as James J. Hill and Pierce and Walter Butler built their houses on the avenue.

From 1906 to the beginning of World War I, Summit again experienced a great period of growth. The houses constructed during this period reflect the gradual transition from the Victorian styles to the style of Historical Revivalism. Also popular were houses that were designed in the avant-garde Prairie School of design. Houses of this type represent Midwestern architecture at its finest. The best-designed Prairie School house in St. Paul is the Ward Beebe house at 2022 Summit. Built in 1912, it was designed by noted architects Purcell and

*Much of the information on Summit Avenue's history for this section was taken from Ernest R. Sandeen's book St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue.



The Wilder Residence (226 Summit) was demolished in 1959. (Ernest Sandeen and Minnesota Historical Society)

Elmslie. During this period from 1906 to 1914, 98 houses were built (a yearly average of 10.8 houses).

The war years saw fewer houses being constructed, but the avenue experienced its final housing boom during the 1920's. Between 1922 and 1928, 82 houses were constructed, mostly west of Fairview. The yearly average for the period (11.7 houses per year) was the highest of any period in the avenue's history. The houses constructed were generally in the revival styles, with Tudor and Georgian being the most popular. Also popular was the practice of adapting Prairie School elements to historic forms.

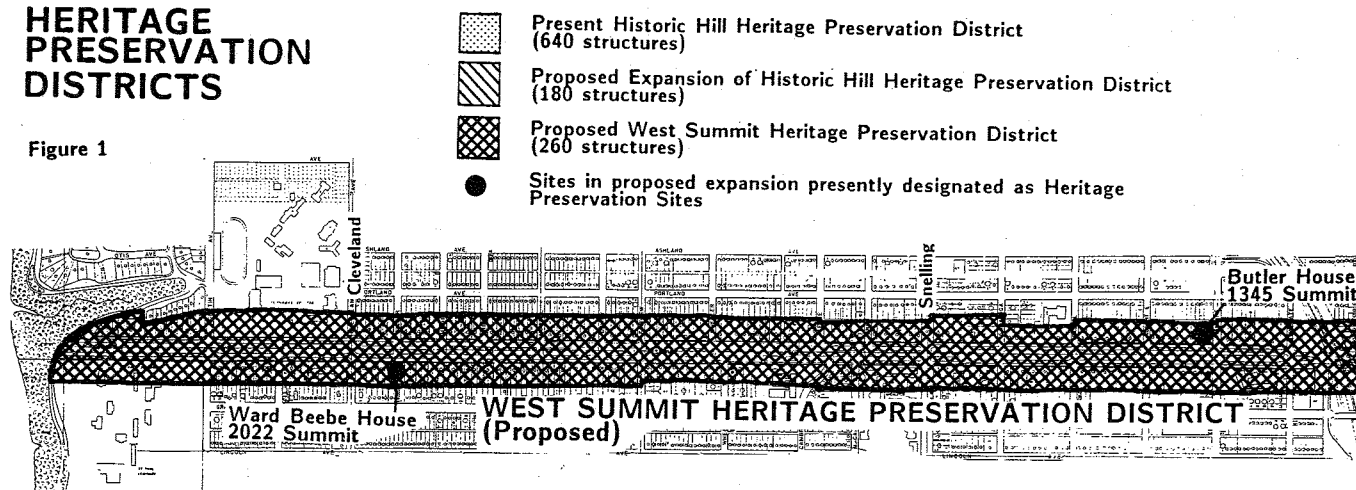
The Period of Decline

After 1928, construction nearly ceased on Summit. The period from 1930 to 1970 saw the deterioration and demolition of some of Summit Avenue's grandest homes. This was especially true on the eastern end of

Summit, where the largest homes were located. In the 1930's, during the Great Depression, a number of families were no longer able to maintain their homes and seven houses were demolished. (While houses had been demolished on Summit before, prior to 1930 the demolition had always been to clear land for larger, more expensive homes.) A number of other homes were saved only because they were given to institutions such as the Catholic Church. During the 1940's only two homes were demolished, but many of Summit's large homes were cut up into rooming houses with up to 15 or 20 units. These units housed workers who came to St. Paul during World War II. The 1950's saw a flight by the wealthy from the city to exclusive suburban developments such as North Oaks. Nine more houses demolished. Among these was perhaps the greatest loss of all, the Amherst Wilder house at 226 Summit. Another five houses were demolished in the 1960's and many surviving homes, especially on Summit's

HERITAGE PRESERVATION DISTRICTS

Figure 1



east end, continued to deteriorate.

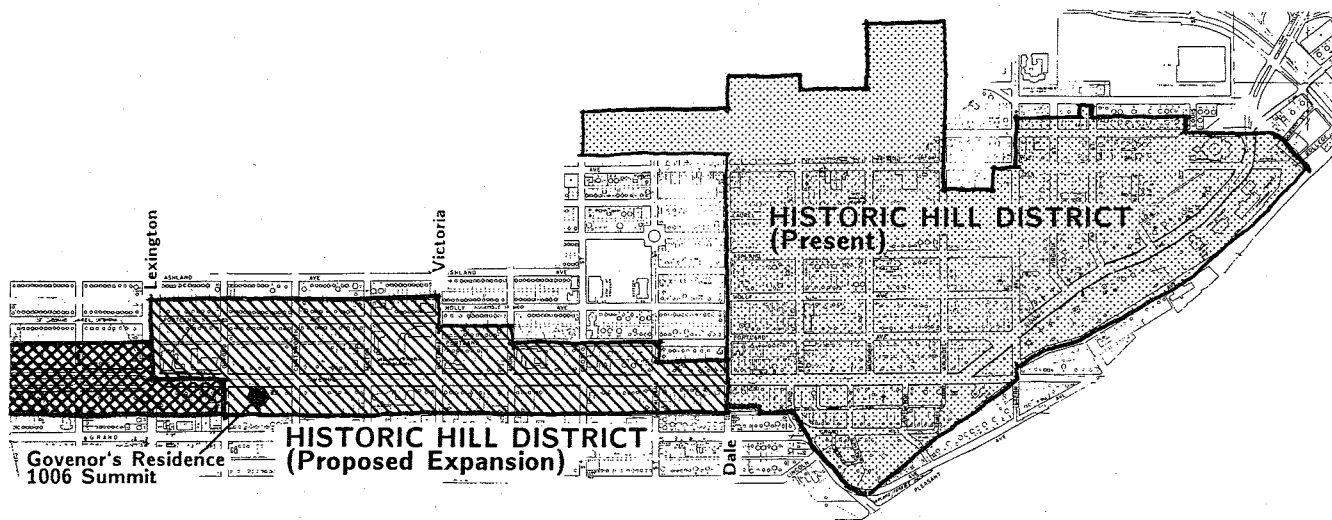
The Renaissance of Summit Avenue

The 1970's saw another five homes demolished. However the course of the avenue had begun to change. Appreciation was growing for the architectural and historical value of the houses on Summit and the surrounding neighborhood. People were also attracted by the low selling prices of these homes. Restoration buffs began to move into these houses and restore them.

Another sign of the renewed interest in Summit Avenue was the publication of Ernest Sandeen's book, St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue. Sandeen, a professor of history at Macalester College, wanted St. Paul's residents to see their city as a special place. His book tells the story of Summit Avenue from its earliest days to the present, combining historic photographs with information on Summit Avenue's architecture and famous residents.

Coinciding with these events was the creation in 1976 of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). Sandeen served as HPC Chairman from 1979 to 1980. The Commission was created to make recommendations to the City Council concerning designation of historic sites and districts and to protect their architectural character by reviewing all building permits for demolition, house moves, new construction, and exterior changes.

The Historic Hill District was designated as St. Paul's first Heritage Preservation District in 1980. It contains over 600 structures in an area roughly bounded by Marshall and Selby to the north, Grötto and Dale to the west, Oakland to the southwest and Irvine on the southeast. (Summit Avenue is included from Selby to Dale.) The HPC currently reviews about 80 cases a year in the Historic Hill District. Of these, roughly three fourths are for minor work (such as reroofing or new windows) which can be handled by City staff and one fourth are for major projects and must be reviewed by the Commission.



Historic Preservation Policies

1. Extend Historic District. The Heritage Preservation Commission and the City Council should extend the boundaries of the existing St. Paul Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District to include Summit Avenue as far west as Oxford Street on the south side of Summit and Lexington Parkway on the north side of Summit. An area extending one to two blocks north of Summit should also be included so that the boundaries of the local district correspond to the National Register District. (See Figure 1.)

The Historic Hill District has been successful in preserving the unique architecture of lower Summit Avenue and Ramsey Hill. Summit Avenue is now included in the District from the Cathedral (Selby Avenue) to Dale Street. The proposed expansion would protect an additional 180 structures on a part of Summit that includes House of Hope Church and the Governor's Mansion. Even though this is an old, established area there is still change going on such as the new

Summit Avenue Assembly of God Church and the plans for a new parking lot at William Mitchell College of Law.

The guidelines and level of regulation currently used in the Historic Hill District are also appropriate for the proposed expansion area. The HPC should review all building permit applications for demolition, house moves, new construction, and exterior alterations (additions, roofing, siding, porches, doors, windows, etc.), as well as signs, billboards, parking lots, and fences.

2. Create West Summit District. The Heritage Preservation Commission and the City Council should create a new West Summit Avenue Heritage Preservation District to include the rest of Summit Avenue not included in the expanded Historic Hill District.

A new district should be created to protect the area one-half block on either side of Summit starting at the western boundary of the expanded Historic Hill District (Oxford Street on the south side of Summit and Lexington on the north.). This area

includes approximately 250 buildings. In order to limit the amount of staff time required to monitor this district, reviews should be limited to construction of new houses, house moves, demolition, additions visible from the street, and parking lots visible from Summit. Minor exterior changes should not be included.

3. Also consider individual historic designations on West Summit Avenue. Since the West Summit Heritage Preservation District will have looser design guidelines, the Heritage Preservation Commission should determine if any additional buildings in the proposed district merit designation as individual historic sites.

There are already two individual historic sites on western Summit Avenue - the Ward Beebe house at 2022 Summit and the Pierce and Walter Butler house at 1345-1347 Summit. Individually designated sites could have detailed design guidelines (as in the Historic Hill District), in contrast to the protection from demolition and review of visible additions proposed for West Summit Avenue.

4. Explore Fire Code Alternatives. The Heritage Preservation Commission should work with the St. Paul Fire Marshal's office to develop acceptable local alternatives to the statewide Fire Code provisions on open stairways, transoms, and other historic architectural elements.

Until the summer of 1985, the Fire Marshal inspected apartment buildings with ten or more units. Now the Fire Marshal is also responsible for inspections of residential buildings with three to ten units. The upcoming inspection schedule will affect many of the houses on Summit Avenue.

Some of the Fire Code items, which are written with contemporary construction in mind, would require significant interior alterations in mansions. State law provides that municipalities may adopt alternative fire safety standards for certain types of situations. The HPC and the Fire Marshal should jointly develop such alternatives that find an acceptable balance between fire safety and architectural preservation.



Grand staircase of the James J. Hill House (240 Summit). Built in 1887 for \$280,000, it is now a house museum run by the Minnesota Historical Society. (Ernest Sandeen and Minnesota Historical Society)

HOUSING

People are fascinated by mansions, and Summit Avenue is where Saint Paul's mansions are lined up in a row for public display. When the Ramsey Hill House Tour opened the doors of 25 Summit Avenue homes last summer, fifteen thousand people went on the tour, more than triple the number projected.

But the mansions no longer house the titans of finance and industry. They moved away little by little, perhaps because of income taxes in the twenties, hard times in the thirties, lack of domestic help in the forties, or the increase in automobile traffic in the fifties. Wealthy families have continued to live on Summit Avenue, but have preferred the smaller (yet ample), somewhat newer houses in the middle and western sections of the Avenue to the old, grand mansions at the east end.

How are mansions being used and maintained? How should they be used? How can they be preserved? These are the central questions for this plan. There are two viewpoints. One is that the very large homes on Summit Avenue are too big and expensive for residential use and should be opened up to other uses such as professional offices, bed and breakfasts, small conference centers, and reception houses. The other viewpoint is that the best strategy for Summit Avenue is to

preserve its residential character and not allow any expansion of commercial and institutional uses in mansions and houses on Summit Avenue. After extensive research and discussion the Summit Avenue Planning Committee strongly endorses the second viewpoint: that the residential character should be maintained and upgraded and that commercial and institutional uses in residential structures should be curtailed.

Housing Policies

5. Preserve residential character. As a matter of consistent City policy, the City should protect Summit Avenue as a residential street and prevent the expansion of commercial and institutional uses in residential structures.

There continue to be proposals to use large Summit Avenue houses for nonresidential uses such as conference centers and professional offices. These proposals should be rejected. While nonresidential investments sometimes offer the prospect of immediate restoration of individual buildings, they deter residential reinvestment that is necessary for the broader pattern of neighborhood conservation or restoration.



495 Summit. Built in 1881 in the Queen Anne style. Today it is a single family house with an accessory apartment in the carriage house. (Ernest Sandeen and Minnesota Historical Society)

The middle and western sections of Summit Avenue have remained stable as residential areas. The main problems have related to college growth, which is addressed in the chapter on institutions.

On the eastern end of Summit Avenue, where RT-2 zoning allows up to four units per lot, there is a clear trend toward moderate density residential use. Figure 2 shows that between the Cathedral and Western Avenue over the last ten years the percentage of houses conforming to zoning increased from 39 per cent to 50 per cent. East of Grotto, 70 per cent of the houses now conform to the zoning standard. The number of houses being used as rooming houses, businesses, or institutions dropped from 22 in 1974 to 15 today.

The renaissance of lower Summit Avenue has been fueled by people restoring large homes for residential use.

Figure 2

**Percentage of Houses in Conforming Use
(Residential Use, up to four units)**

	1962	1974	1985
Selby to Western	38%	39%	50%
Western to Grotto	75%	76%	82%
Total (Selby to Grotto)	61%	62%	70%

Residential deconversion has taken three forms: (a) homeowner with accessory apartments to help meet costs; (b) condo conversion; and (c) investor in rental restoration for historic tax credits. The three forms have worked together so that when one market is weak, another market comes in. The homeowner-with-accessory-apartments is the most common form of residential reinvestment.

The trend toward residential use will continue if it is supported by City zoning policy. The number of professionals and managers who can afford Summit Avenue housing is growing in the city. The downtown is growing. The Selby-Western neighborhood commercial center is expanding. Ramsey Hill has a much better reputation as a neighborhood than it did in the 1970's. These factors underlie the projections that reinvestment will continue along Summit Avenue.

Allowing new commercial and institutional uses would destabilize the neighborhood and threaten the progress made so far. First, commercial and institutional uses tend to bid up the price of houses, making them harder to market as homes. Second, their presence makes Summit a less desirable place to live. They normally generate more traffic than residential uses. Successful commercial uses may try to expand; unsuccessful ones may be followed by a succession of new uses. A business run by someone who does not live in the neighborhood is likely to be less sensitive to the concerns of residents.

People who buy homes on Summit Avenue can also afford to live in areas such as Kenwood and White Bear Lake. If Summit Avenue is to continue to attract these people it must seen as a desirable neighborhood. Preventing the expansion of commercial and institutional uses will help ensure that it is.

6. Permit some carriage houses and accessory apartments. The existing zoning districts on Summit Avenue are generally satisfactory, but stronger enforcement by the City is needed. The RT-2 district east of Grotto reflects the very large size of the houses, which average 6,000 square feet. In single family zones west of Grotto, the City should add a special condition use to allow accessory apartments in houses larger than 4,000 square feet. The City should permit the reuse of bona fide historic carriage houses for accessory apartments in single family and duplex zones by means of a special condition use permit.

Many of the larger homes on Summit Avenue are well suited for accessory apartments. A number of them once had servants quarters on the third floor. The City should consider the creation of accessory apartments in very large homes as a special condition use in cases where:

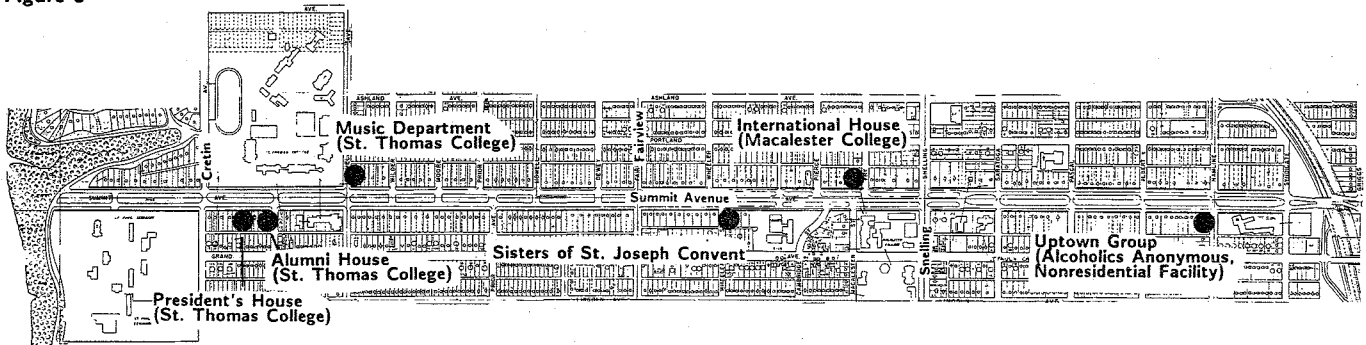
- The house is larger than 4,000 square feet in total area. (Total area as used in this plan means foundation size, not including porches, times the number of above-grade floors. For most Summit Avenue houses, the total size was estimated as 2.5 times the foundation size.)



A Summit Avenue carriage house with an apartment unit on the second floor (PED)

INSTITUTIONAL USES IN HOUSES

Figure 3



- The accessory apartment is no larger than 30% of the area of the house.

A small number of Summit Avenue homes located in single family zoning districts have carriage houses large enough for an apartment unit. The City should encourage the conversion of these carriage houses as a means of preserving them. The best procedure for permitting carriage house apartments in areas not zoned for them would be by a special condition use permit. A carriage house apartment should be allowed in existing structures if adequate parking is provided. A petition of neighboring property owners should be required.

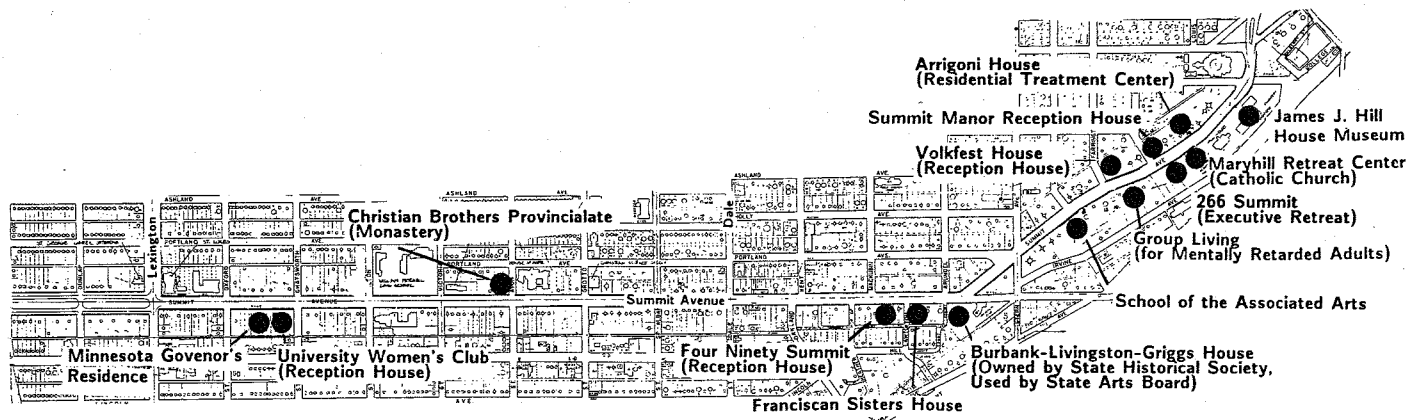
7. Enforce nonconforming use provisions. The City should have a policy of strict enforcement of the nonconforming use provisions in the Zoning Code. The Certificate of Occupancy program should be used to monitor and control nonconforming residential uses.

Buildings with three or more dwelling units are inspected once every three years under the Certificate of Occupancy program. This inspection determines the number of

dwelling units in the building as well as covering housing and fire code items. Most of the nonconforming units on Summit have been inspected, but not certified (usually because of Fire Code problems such as stairwells). Until buildings are certified the City can inspect them as often as it chooses. If there is reason to believe that the number of units in a building has gone down, the building should be inspected. If the number of units has gone down, the new number should be established as the upper limit on the Certificate of Occupancy.

8. Add a negative intent statement to the Zoning Code. The City should add a negative intent statement to the Zoning Code to say that small conference centers, private retreat centers, reception houses, and small inns (beyond what might be allowed under a bed and breakfast ordinance) are not permitted in R-1 through RT-2 zoning districts.

There has been a great deal of discussion about whether certain types of uses, such as



private retreat centers, are permitted as similar uses in residential areas such as Summit Avenue. To clarify this issue a statement should be added to the Zoning Code which says that such uses are not intended for residential areas. This would act as a guide in zoning cases involving determination of similar use.

The following sentence should be added to the intent paragraphs at the beginning of the sections in the Zoning Code covering R-1 through R-4, RT-1, and RT-2 residential districts:

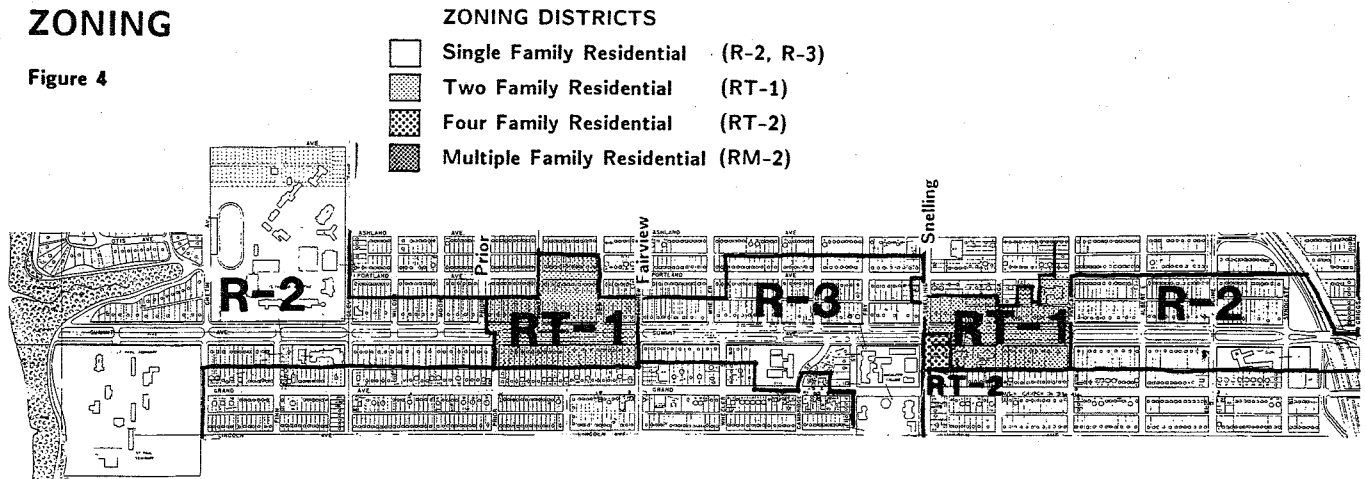
"Because of its residential nature, this district is not intended for more intensive uses such as small conference centers, private retreat centers, and reception houses."

9. Permit Bed and Breakfasts. The City should enact the bed and breakfast ordinance proposed by the Planning staff (Fall, 1985) with certain amendments:

- a. Owner occupancy should be defined to ensure that the bed and breakfast operator has at least a 50 percent interest in the ownership of the property.
- b. All bed and breakfasts must be registered with the City.
- c. The maximum number of bed and breakfast units permitted in bed and breakfasts in RT-1 through RM-2 zoning districts should be four, not five.
- d. The minimum lot size for bed and breakfast operations with two through four units should be 10,000 square feet, not 6,000 square feet.
- e. Bed and breakfasts with two through four units should be located at least 1,000 feet from the nearest other bed and breakfast with two through four units.
- f. Bed and breakfasts should be permitted in large multi-family residences in RT-2 through RM-2 zoning districts. (The proposed ordinance would restrict bed and breakfasts to single family homes.) The total number of bed and breakfast units should be limited so that the number of bed and breakfast units plus the number of dwelling units on the lot does not exceed five.

ZONING

Figure 4



Bed and breakfasts are an increasingly popular way to travel and even though there are only a handful of them in St. Paul now, and none on Summit Avenue, their number will probably increase. The City should have an ordinance to regulate them.

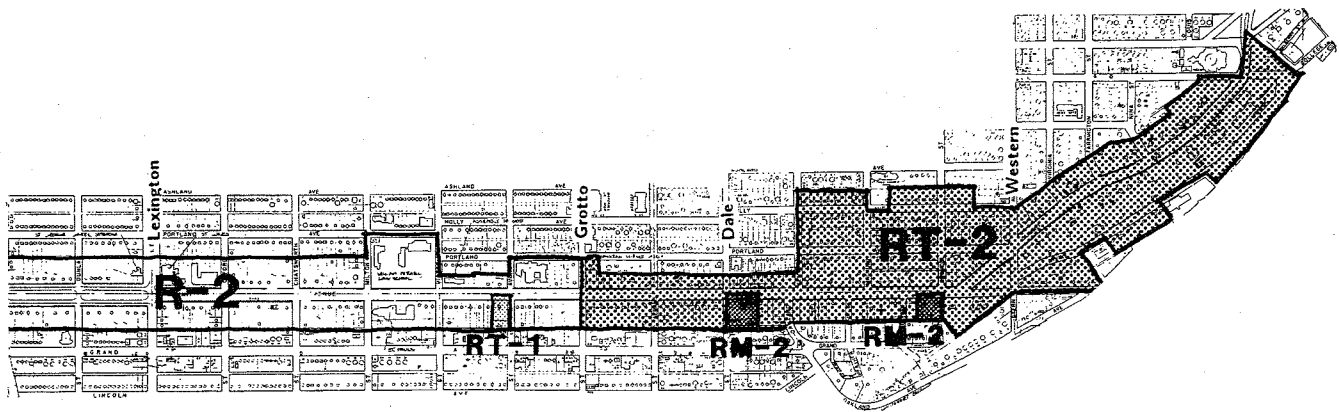
The ordinance proposed by the Planning staff would permit bed and breakfasts with one unit to operate in single family homes in any residential district provided certain conditions are met including owner occupancy, minimum lot size, off-street parking, and no exterior changes to the building. It would also permit bed and breakfasts of up to five units in zoning districts RT-1 and higher with stricter lot size and parking requirements. (The full text of the proposed ordinance is given in Appendix J.)

The proposed ordinance should be strengthened to limit the impact of larger bed and breakfasts on the surrounding neighborhood:

- Requiring owners to have at least a 50% interest in the property is intended to eliminate the possibility of a group of

investors establishing a bed and breakfast, hiring a manager, and then giving him a small interest as a way of avoiding the owner occupancy requirement.

- Registering all bed and breakfasts will enable the City to monitor them. This will be useful in following citywide trends and in enforcement in the event of a complaint against an individual operation.
- A maximum of four units is appropriate for non-single family residential areas.
- Raising the minimum lot size required for bed and breakfasts with more than one unit to 10,000 square feet will help separate neighbors from the added activity that could be generated and ensure that lots have adequate room for off-street parking.
- Some areas of the city, because of location or special characteristics, could some day attract a concentration of bed and breakfasts. Summit Avenue, Ramsey Hill, and Crocus Hill have this potential because of their large houses and historic interest. To prevent too



many large bed and breakfasts from locating in one area, there should be at least 1,000 feet between bed and breakfasts with two through four units.

- In certain cases bed and breakfasts should be allowed in houses that are not single family. Some houses on Summit have plenty of space for an accessory apartment and for the owner occupant to offer bed and breakfast rooms within the main unit.

10. Allow expanded Home Occupations.

After more staff analysis and the normal public review of proposed zoning text amendment, the City should permit two outside employees for home occupations located in dwelling units over 4,000 square feet. The present home occupation ordinance should be made more specific about permitted occupations and required conditions.

The Zoning Code presently permits one outside employee for a home occupation regardless of the size of the house in which it is located. However, the large homes covered by this proposed change could easily handle a business with two outside

employees without affecting the house or the surrounding neighborhood. Since these businesses would normally operate during the day when most residents are gone, parking problems would be minimal, and the presence of people in the neighborhood during the day at a home occupation would increase neighborhood security. These expanded home occupations would not change the residential character of Summit Avenue. The actual number of them would probably never be large. In addition, the Zoning Code requires that any business in the home be secondary to the residential use, while forbidding enlargement or structural changes in the house.

In addition to this change, parts of the home occupation section of the Zoning Code should be made more specific. A list of permitted and prohibited occupations should be included. This list could be automatically updated when new occupations are ruled on by the Zoning Administrator. The ordinance should also be more specific about conditions such as number of customers/clients, traffic generated, and storage of vehicles and equipment. Certain types of home occupations should possibly be regulated as special condition uses, so the City could monitor them.

11. Enforce housing maintenance standards.
The City should use existing City housing inspection programs to ensure that all houses on Summit Avenue are adequately maintained.

The housing code sets minimum standards for both exterior appearance and structural integrity. The most important ordinance covering appearance requires that houses with wooden siding be properly painted. This ordinance is only a year old, but compliance has been good so far. Other ordinances cover appearance indirectly through safety standards. For example, an unsightly porch with unsafe steps could be tagged. There are not a large number of houses in poor condition on Summit Avenue but getting them fixed up would make a significant improvement in the area. Enforcement of the code for structural problems should be used in cases where neglect could cause significant

damage to a house, for example, where an unsound roof needs repair. Again, this involves only a few houses, but enforcement should be used to stabilize these houses until they are bought by someone interested in restoration.

Residents will need to work with the City in this effort by reporting problems that they observe.



Spanish Colonial style home on western Summit Avenue is an example of the architectural variety on the Avenue. (PED)

12. Monitor individual properties. Summit Avenue residents, the Planning Division, and City inspection staff should monitor the use of certain properties. The list of these properties will change as Summit Avenue continues to develop. As this plan was being developed in late 1985, the following properties were of concern:

ROOMING HOUSES/GROUP HOMES

255 Summit

Approximately 20 people recovering from chemical dependency live here. The City Council voted that this is a Community Residential Facility and therefore illegal because it is located too near to existing Community Residential Facilities. The owners have appealed this decision and the matter is now in the courts.

318 Summit

Rooming House (11 Units)

322-24 Summit

Rooming House (13 Units)

340 Summit

Apartments and Sleeping Rooms (8 Units). Building is in good condition. Owner has stated plans to deconvert to a lower number of units.

624 Summit

Rooming House (9 Units)

1568 Summit

Rooming House sold by Macalester College to a developer with an agreement that the house would be deconverted to four condominium units. Deconversion has not occurred and under the contract the property may revert back to Macalester. Macalester is studying the situation and its options.

1576 Summit

Same as 1568 Summit

INSTITUTIONAL USE

420 Summit

University Club. Upstairs sleeping rooms should not be converted to offices.

432 Summit

Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House. Owned by the Minnesota State Historical Society. Used for a time as a house museum. Now leased to the State Arts Board for office space. Future plans are unclear.

1038 Summit

The owners proposed using the house as a small conference center but the Planning Division told them that zoning did not permit this.

INSTITUTIONS

Summit Avenue is a street of institutions as well as residences. These include 19 houses of worship on or near Summit, three colleges and a seminary as well as a museum, an art school, a retreat house, religious group homes, reception houses, a private club, and public offices. (See Figure 5) Some of these, such as churches and colleges, are highly visible while others occupy former mansions and the general public may be unaware of their presence.

The institutions have benefited Summit over the years. The churches and colleges have created some of Summit Avenue's most notable architecture. Their presence has contributed to Summit Avenue's renown. In addition, during Summit Avenue's period of decline, the Catholic Church took over and used several houses which might otherwise have been demolished.

But the institutions have caused problems as well. The most serious problem has been the impact of institutional expansion. This has been especially serious around St. Thomas College which has doubled its enrollment over the last ten years and expanded beyond its original boundaries to include property on the south side of Summit. The increased density, congestion, and traffic have affected the character of

the neighborhood. Some neighbors of the college allege that their homes have been devalued, while the college maintains that residential values around the college have kept up with the surrounding MLS districts.

Parking is another related problem around some Summit Avenue institutions. Parking is a serious problem around St. Thomas College. Parking for William Mitchell College of Law is also a concern. Smaller parking problems exist around the Hill House and School of the Associated Arts. The proposed upgrading of the University Club could also increase parking problems there.

The use of mansions by institutions is another problem. This topic is also covered in the Housing chapter.

Institutions Policies

13. Control institutional use of mansions.
The City should contain the growth of institutional use of mansions on Summit Avenue through a policy of strict interpretation of nonconforming use and similar use provisions in the Zoning Code.

After considering alternative strategies, the Committee concluded that this policy offers the best means of preventing the

establishment of new institutions in mansions and controlling the ones already existing. (Also see Recommendations 5 and 8.)

14. St. Thomas must work to improve the parking situation. If the Planning Commission finds that there is not sufficient progress towards improving the parking problems at St. Thomas College, it will advise the City Council that no building permits should be issued for new buildings or the enlargement of existing buildings at St. Thomas. The Planning staff should develop clear procedures, for Planning Commission review, that detail how the new college parking standards, which are based on enrollments not on buildings, will be implemented through zoning reviews and building permits. The colleges, neighbors, and City staff need to know what the ground rules will be.

St. Thomas College has grown dramatically in the past decade, going from 3,200 students in 1975 to 6,400 in the fall of 1984. This growth had occurred in both traditional full-time students, who are primarily undergraduates attending weekday classes, and nontraditional part-time students, who are primarily graduate students attending evening and weekend

classes. With this increase in enrollment has come an increase in parking demand.

Although the college has added 400 on-campus parking spaces since 1975, they have not been sufficient to keep up with the demand. The result is a serious parking problem which has affected the surrounding neighborhood, especially south and east of the campus.

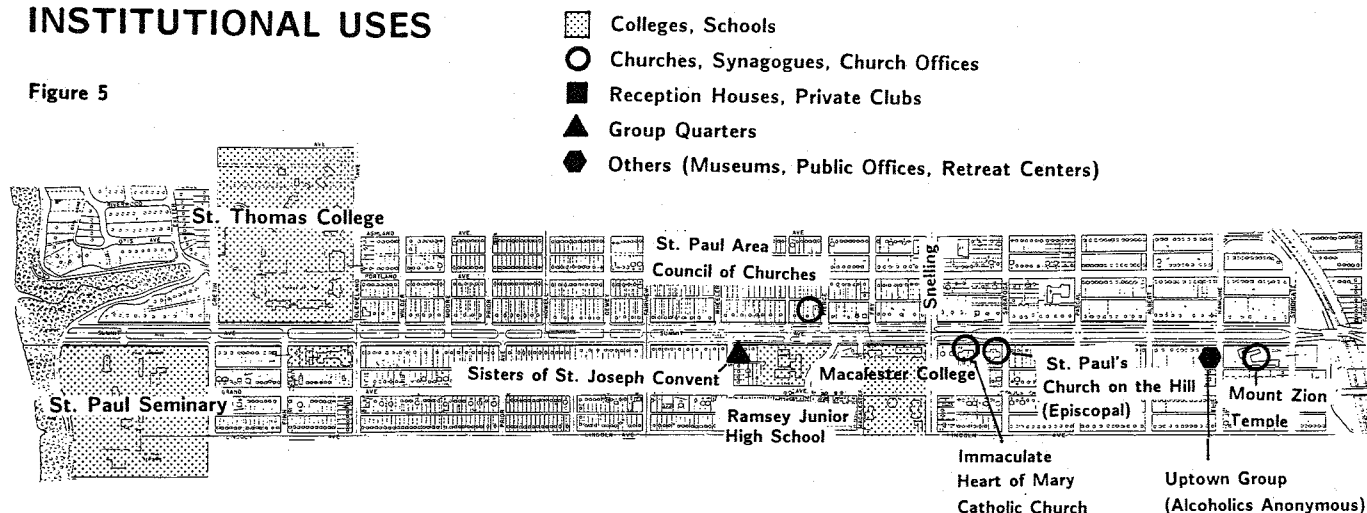
The College Zoning Study (August, 1985) calls for the Joint Committee on Community/College Relations, which represents St. Thomas College and the surrounding neighborhood, to develop a parking implementation plan for the college. The Planning Commission is scheduled to receive a copy of this plan by April 1, 1986, and monitor progress toward implementing the schedule developed in the plan. If the Planning Commission does not feel that adequate progress is being made in developing or implementing the plan, it is to advise the City Council that no new building permits should be issued until progress can be shown. This policy is supported by Recommendation 8 of the Grand Avenue West Task Force Parking and Zoning Report adopted by the City Council in 1983. That recommendation said:



Parking is a problem near some Summit Avenue institutions. (PED)

INSTITUTIONAL USES

Figure 5



"The Zoning Code parking requirement for colleges should be enforced. Building permits for new buildings or the enlargement or increased intensity of use of existing buildings should not be issued unless this parking requirement is met."

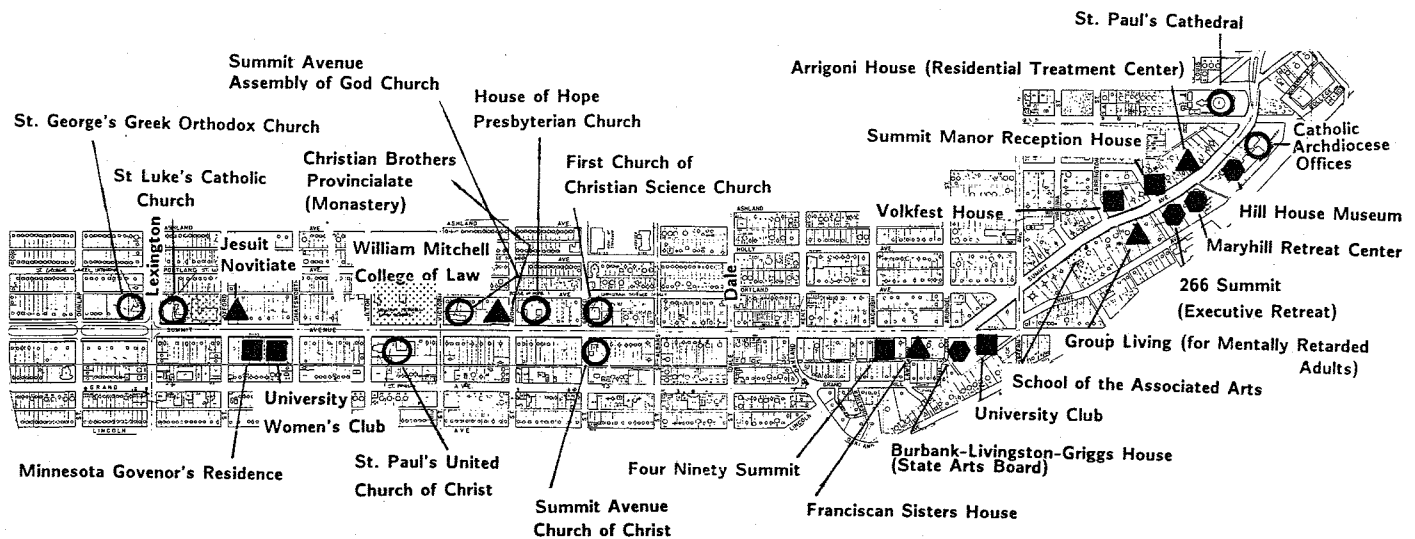
An idea suggested at one point to help the parking problem at St. Thomas was to create new spaces by cutting into the parkway median. The harm that this would do to the appearance of Summit Avenue far outweighs the small number of parking spaces it would add.

15. Through planning, balance the expansion of St. Thomas with the protection of the neighborhood. The College of St. Thomas should prepare a master plan for their growth that deals with parking and traffic, buffering of activity centers from neighborhoods, functional relationships on campus, building heights and future architectural image along Summit Avenue. Their expansion should follow the recommendations of the College Zoning Study.

The traditional, platted area of the St. Thomas campus is bounded by Cretin, Cleveland, Selby, and Summit Avenues. Over the last ten to fifteen years the College has acquired a number of properties east of Cleveland Avenue and south of Summit Avenue to accommodate its increased enrollment.

The College Zoning Study conducted by the Planning Commission earlier this year identifies the two blocks south of the St. Thomas campus bounded by Summit, Cleveland, Grand, and Cretin as the appropriate area for future expansion by the college and recommends that the college should not expand east of Cleveland Avenue. College activities will also move to the St. Paul Seminary campus once their affiliation is finalized. To protect the residential neighborhood to the north, St. Thomas should not be allowed to expand onto the north side of Summit Avenue between Cretin Avenue and the River.

Any expansion is subject to Zoning Code requirements. If additional property is purchased by the College for uses not identified as permitted in that zoning



district, a special use permit should be required. If the college prepares a master plan and can package several development projects together, the Planning Commission should consider the projects together in a special condition use permit for a specified number of years as a means of expediting public review and approval.

16. Limit the height of college buildings. The City should amend the Zoning Code to establish a building height limit for college buildings consistent with currently prevailing college building heights. The eastern two-thirds of the St. Paul Seminary campus should be removed from the 40-foot height limit of the RC-3 (River Corridor) overlay zone.

Buildings on college campuses are not covered by the height restrictions for the zoning district in which they are located. Instead they can be no higher than their setback from a property line. A height limit would be appropriate for colleges in residential areas. Instituting a height limit, together with the recently adopted parking requirements, would, in effect, put a ceiling on how large a college can grow on

a confined campus. The Planning staff should do a survey of college buildings heights and propose a standard that is consistent with prevailing college development.

The St. Paul Seminary is the one campus which presently has a height limit. Because it is in the RC-3 (River Corridor) Overlay District, no building can be taller than 40 feet. The 40-foot limit should apply only on the western portion of the campus, which is near the river bluff. The eastern two-thirds should be rezoned so that it is subject to the same height limit set for other colleges.

17. Grant permits allowing William Mitchell parking lot. The City should require extraordinary setbacks and landscaping, but should then approve the large parking lot proposed by William Mitchell College of Law.

The law school proposed to build an accessory parking lot in 1984; they revised and enlarged the proposed lot in 1985. The proposal was considered by two Planning Commission task forces, the Summit Avenue Planning Committee Planning Council and the Summit Hill Association.

After hearing extensive and divided testimony the Planning Commission gave preliminary approval to the William Mitchell lot on March 28, 1986. The Planning Commission is sympathetic to the aesthetic concerns of the Summit Avenue Planning Committee,* but finds the proposed lot is both a practical solution to an area parking problem and fully within the legal rights of the college. The Planning Commission's approval stipulates six conditions that mitigate negative aesthetic impacts on Summit Avenue.

18. Develop design guidelines for parking lots. To protect the image of Summit Avenue, the City should discourage the construction or enlargement of parking lots visible from the avenue. However, cases may arise where the power of the City to stop construction is limited. For these cases, the Planning Commission in conjunction with the Heritage Preservation Commission should develop design guidelines for parking lots on Summit Avenue. These would apply to any new parking lot and would help guide improvements to existing lots.

There are eight institutional parking lots located on Summit Avenue and plans to greatly expand the lot at William Mitchell College of Law. Parking lots, unless they are carefully (and expensively) designed, violate the aesthetics and image of Summit Avenue.

* The Summit Avenue Planning Committee opposed the William Mitchell lot as a violation of the plan's goals or preserving the residential environment and making the street a showcase for the city. Their draft of the Summit Avenue Plan argued that the parking lot would be permanent, whereas the parking problem might be a temporary effect of Victoria Crossing's current popularity. It said that residential permit parking and use of church lots a block or two away would be a better solution than paving another large parking lot in the neighborhood.

Design guidelines should cover the following topics:

Location. The front yards of Summit Avenue institutions are not appropriate sites for parking lots. Parking lots should not form the setting for institutions on Summit Avenue. They should not form the entry for people going into the buildings. Where possible, parking lots should be set back at least as far as the building facades. Ideally, they should be located behind buildings where they will not be visible from the street.

Screening. Parking lots should be screened from view from the street using materials appropriate for the site. Preferred treatments include historic fences and walls, preferably used in combination with a hedge. Changes of grade level to sink the parking from view are appropriate, but the rolling earth berms of the 1960's and 70's are not.

Lighting. Lights should be 12 to 15 feet tall to match the scale of the street lighting on Summit. Lighting a parking lot from one or two 40-foot tall lights is not appropriate.

Planting islands. Planting islands should be used to break up the expanse of large parking lots and provide space for landscaping. The Zoning Code calls for one island for every 50 parking spaces.

Shade trees. Shade trees should be planted between parking lots and the street and within planting islands in the lot itself. Trees can help to fill the visual void along the avenue that is created when a parking lot occupies land where a building would normally be. Trees can draw the eye up away from the parking surface.

Plant Materials. Plant materials should be selected to match the historic character of Summit Avenue. Species such as Russian olive, which have a modern, suburban feeling, should be avoided.

Signs. Signs should be designed to complement the specific site and the overall character of Summit Avenue through choice of material, color, location, and size.

19. University Club should manage its parking. The University Club should continue steps, such as valet parking, to manage their parking problem. It should also continue to look for ways to provide additional off-street parking.

At the present time, the University Club uses valet parking on weekends and other busy evenings. The cars are parked around the three parks near the club, so they are not in front of residences.

The University Club has recently been restructured and has new management. Membership had been declining for many years, but now it is on the upswing. Growing membership may translate into growing parking problems in the area.

20. The University Club should not add office space. The sleeping rooms on the upper floors of the University Club should not be converted to rental office space.

The upper floors of the University Club were used as sleeping rooms for many years. At one time, some of them were used by state legislators when they were in session. Today, however, sleeping rooms are no longer viable and not compatible with the rest of the University Club. Converting these rooms into offices is not a good use in this residential area and does not conform to zoning requirements. A better plan might be to consolidate these rooms into a few apartments. This would continue the residential use of the space but be more in tune with today's housing market.

21. Hill Museum should continue to manage parking. The Hill House Museum should continue to schedule major events for times when visitors can use the Cathedral parking lot.

The Hill Museum periodically hosts events which attract up to 200 people. The museum has an agreement to use the Cathedral parking lot across the street. The lot is large enough to handle the cars from these events. The Museum has a policy of scheduling large events only at times when the Cathedral lot is available. The Museum should continue this policy to avoid on-street parking problems.

22. Preserve Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House. The Minnesota State Historical Society should strive to reopen the Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House as a museum at a future date. If the Historical Society determines that this is not possible and decides to sell the property, it should do so only with covenants in the sales agreement to preserve the interior of the house. No use that is more intense than the present office space should be permitted.

The Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House is owned by the Minnesota State Historical Society. Until a few years ago they operated the house as a museum. When this became economically impossible, they leased the house to the State Arts Board as office space. The City sees this use as a holding action while the Historical Society determines if it can reestablish the house as a museum. The City would not permit a private business to operate an office in the house.

The interior of the house is one of the finest on Summit Avenue. Entire rooms were brought over from Europe and reconstructed in the house. The present office use subjects the interior to some wear and tear but leaves it basically intact. The desire to preserve the interior places some limits on how the house can be reused: although it might be possible to convert to a single family home with an attic accessory apartment, dividing it into four condominiums would clearly destroy the integrity of the interior. If the Historical Society sells the house, it should do so only with covenants to protect the interior.

PARKWAY AND OPEN SPACE

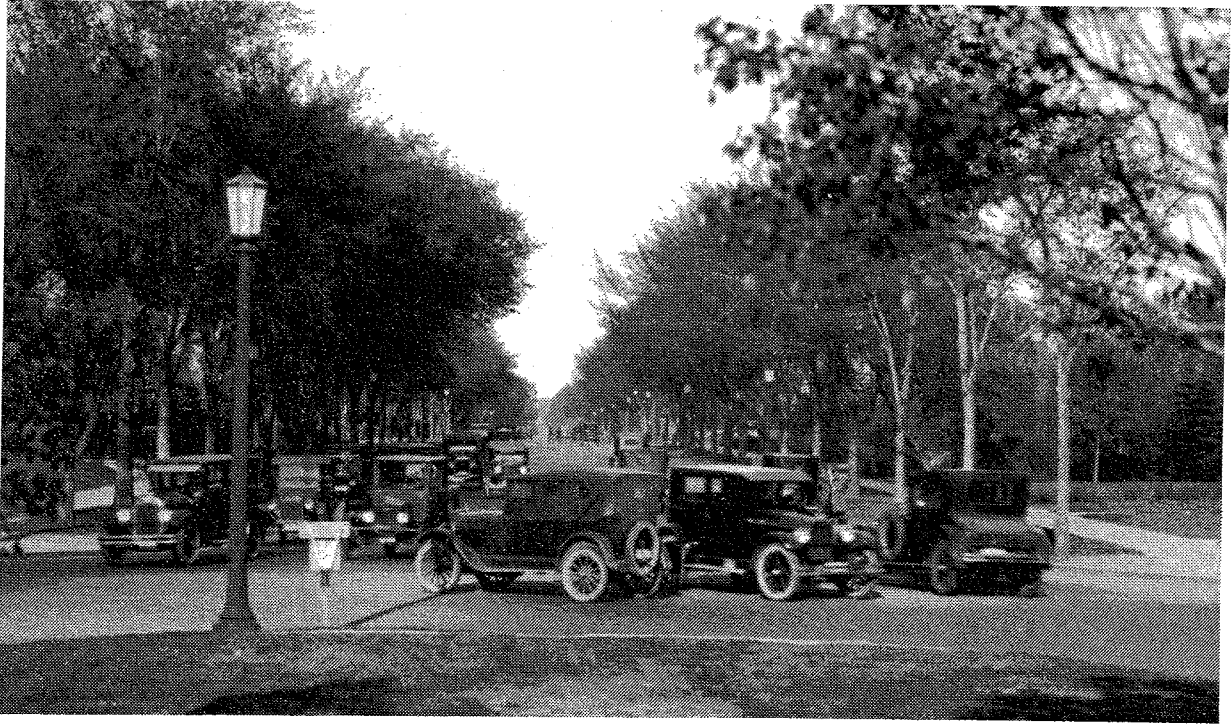
The image of Summit Avenue as a grand boulevard is a product of both its fine architecture and the public parkway itself. The parkway, with its shade trees and old fashioned street lamps lining the street, provides a continuity and order that ties together the variety of architectural styles.

Summit Avenue is a major, critical spoke in the city's structure, providing the community both form and beauty. Summit Avenue runs four and one half miles from the Cathedral to the river. Its eastern half is a wide street with a boulevard on each side. The public right of way is 100 feet wide and the corridor's full width from house front to house front is typically 160 to 200 feet. In comparison, large houses on nearby Lincoln Avenue are generally 110 feet from the the house across the street. From Lexington west the street takes on the characteristics of a true parkway with a 200-foot right-of-way which includes a 90-foot-wide grassy, tree lined median.

To continue as a handsome residential street and city showcase, the Summit Avenue parkway and open space need to be maintained and improved.

The major issues concerning Summit Avenue's role as a parkway include:

- Tree replacement and landscaping. The trees lost on Summit to Dutch elm disease are still being replaced. Related to this is the need to reexamine the landscape plan for Summit.
- Sidewalks on lower Summit Avenue. Most of the old tile sidewalks on lower Summit are in poor condition. Other elements, such as the roadway, curbing, and remaining sidewalks on Summit are in good condition.
- Traffic. The number of cars using Summit and their speed is a problem for Summit as a residential street.
- Bicycling. Ways need to be found to make bicycling safer on Summit Avenue.
- Summit Avenue as part of the parkway system. Scheduled public improvements at the ends of Summit provide a chance to strengthen the connection between Summit and other parkways.



Summit Avenue in the 1920's. Looking east from Lexington. (Ernest Sandeen and Minnesota Historical Society)

Parkway and Open Space Policies

23. Improve parkway median landscaping. Parks and Recreation should improve the landscaping of the parkway median on the western portion of Summit Avenue following guidelines developed by the Committee. Priority should be given to replanting the rows of street trees in the median where mature trees have been lost. The landscaping of the interior of the median should also be improved.

The 80-foot-wide median on Summit Avenue west of Lexington gives the area a beautiful, park-like character. Although the homes on western Summit Avenue are generally not as large as those to the east, the quality of the homes and the setting convey a similar sense of distinction and elegance.

Planting on the median is now done by the City Forester bit by bit as trees become available. He uses an in-house landscape plan developed by Parks and Recreation.

Given the importance of Summit Avenue as a parkway, Parks and Recreation should submit a proposal for the 1988-89 Capitol Improvement Budget for landscape improvements in the median. In addition to speeding up planting, a C.I.B. project would give Parks and Recreation a design budget to review the current landscape plan and decide whether the plan should be implemented as is or modified. The project envisioned is strictly a planting program which would cost \$100,000 to \$150,000.

The Summit Avenue Planning Committee met with a group of landscape architects. From this meeting, the Committee and staff developed landscape guidelines that Parks and Recreation should use to review its landscape plan for the medians.

- a. Reinforce the stately, grand character of Summit.
- b. Permit and frame views of the houses. The landscape should strengthen the sense that Summit Avenue is a single space, contained by the facades of the large houses on both sides.
- c. Be simple so that the parkway landscaping does not compete for attention with the variety of architecture.
- d. Provide continuity along the Avenue.
- e. Use accent plantings to give seasonal interest, to define spaces along the parkway and to add interest where the architecture is not outstanding.

Priority in implementing the plan should be given to replanting in the existing rows of street trees in the median where mature trees have been lost, since these trees have the most visual impact on people driving or biking along the street.

24. Speed up street tree replanting. The City and residents should share the cost to speed up the schedule for replacement of shade trees on the boulevards of Summit Avenue.

Summit Avenue, like the rest of St. Paul, has lost most of the elm trees on its boulevards. Many of the lost trees have already been replaced with new trees such as maple and pin oak. However many trees remain to be planted. Approximately 250 trees are needed to fill existing gaps where trees have been lost and another 100 will be needed in the future to replace elms that are still alive but will soon be gone. The replacement program should be carried out as quickly as possible so that Summit can again be a street lined with trees.

An existing program for speeding up tree replacement where the residents and the City share the cost should be used along

Summit Avenue. Under this plan residents, through their district council, can purchase a two and one-half inch diameter tree for their boulevard for \$75, which is about half the actual cost. The tree is installed by the City's contractor and guaranteed for one year.

The district councils along Summit or a future Summit Avenue organization should promote replanting by identifying properties needing trees and informing owners of the availability of this program.

25. Trim trees to canopy form. Recently planted boulevard and median trees on Summit Avenue should receive two extra rounds of tree trimming so they will develop a form which permits views beneath their canopies. This should be done either through a volunteer network or by the City with costs assessed to residents.

The types of trees which have been planted to replace the elms have branching patterns which do not lend themselves to forming the high arching canopy that was traditional on Summit Avenue. Although a uniform high canopy cannot be recreated, it is important that the new trees be trimmed as high as possible so that the spatial feeling of the elms can re-emerge and people can still see beneath the trees to view the homes.

For the new trees to achieve canopy form, they must be trimmed on a regular basis. The City Forester feels that, ideally, tree trimming should be done every five years. However, in recent years the citywide schedule has been only once every eleven years. To correct for this, two extra rounds of tree trimming should be scheduled for young trees on Summit Avenue. This would mean that these trees, in addition to getting trimmed at roughly eleven and twenty two years would also be trimmed at five and fifteen years. Only new trees would be trimmed since this is the critical period for establishing their form. Mature trees, which have established their forms and are much more costly to trim, would not be included.

The cost of this program would be approximately \$21,600. (The price of trimming one small tree one time is \$12 and there are approximately 900 trees that will need extra trimming, with 560 existing small trees, 240 spaces which need trees, and 100 elms which will need to be replaced. Two trimmings X \$12 per trimming X 900 trees = \$21,600. This works out to \$58 per house on Summit Avenue over the entire twenty year years. Other parkway maintenance tasks beside tree trimming were seen as problems by many Summit Avenue residents, especially mowing and dandelion control. The Summit Avenue Planning Committee recommended that one maintenance crew be responsible for Summit Avenue to foster "ownership", pride, and consistency. However, the Parks and Recreation Division responded that assigning one crew to Summit Avenue would not improve the level of service and would conflict with their organization for maintenance on a

citywide basis. The Planning Commission recommends that the parkway maintenance concerns be addressed by the City staff network proposed in recommendation 35.

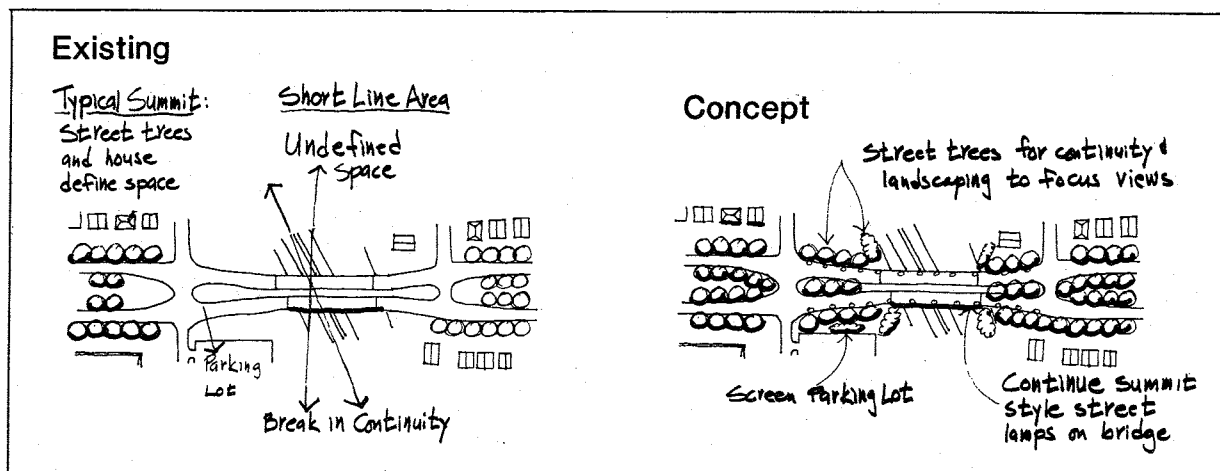
26. Improve the Short Line Area. Public Works and Parks and Recreation should make improvements in the appearance of the Short Line Bridge and the area around it, especially in front of the Mount Zion parking lot.

The Short Line Bridge is a break in the continuity of Summit Avenue. Improvement of the bridge itself by the Department of Public Works and landscaping of the surrounding areas by the Division of Parks and Recreation would strengthen this area and provide a sense of continuity.



Short Line

Improvements should be made to the Short Line Bridge and surrounding area so that it better fits the overall character of Summit Avenue.



Improvement of the bridge will make it fit the overall look of Summit Avenue better. The low "old fashioned" street lights, which are an important part of the streetscape, should be used on the bridge to replace the existing standard street light fixtures. The railing of the bridge should get a treatment more in keeping with the historic quality of Summit Avenue. The bridge improvements should be proposed jointly by Public Works and the district councils along Summit Avenue in the 1988-89 C.I.B. process.

Planting should be used to screen views and focus them on Summit Avenue. This is especially true of the area around the large, unlandscaped parking lot of Mount Zion Temple. In addition boulevard and median trees should be planted to provide greater continuity with the rest of the avenue.

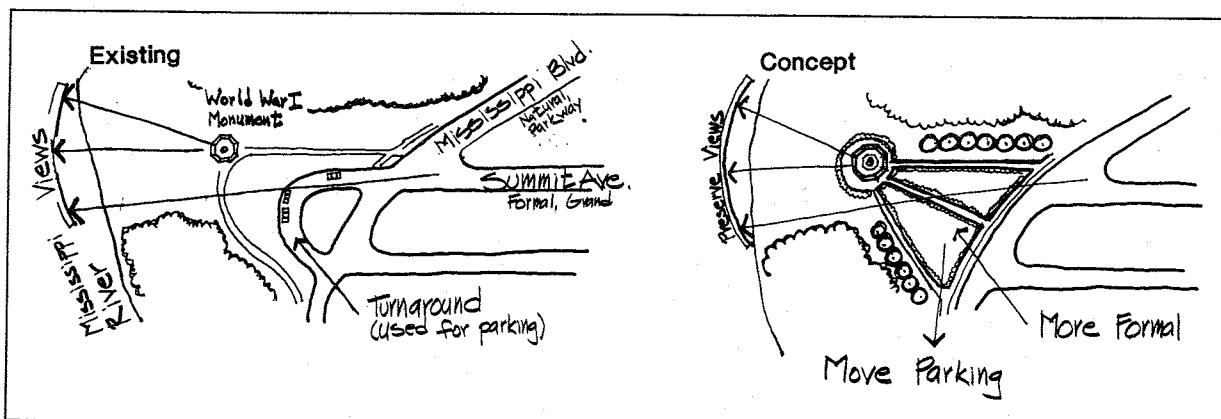


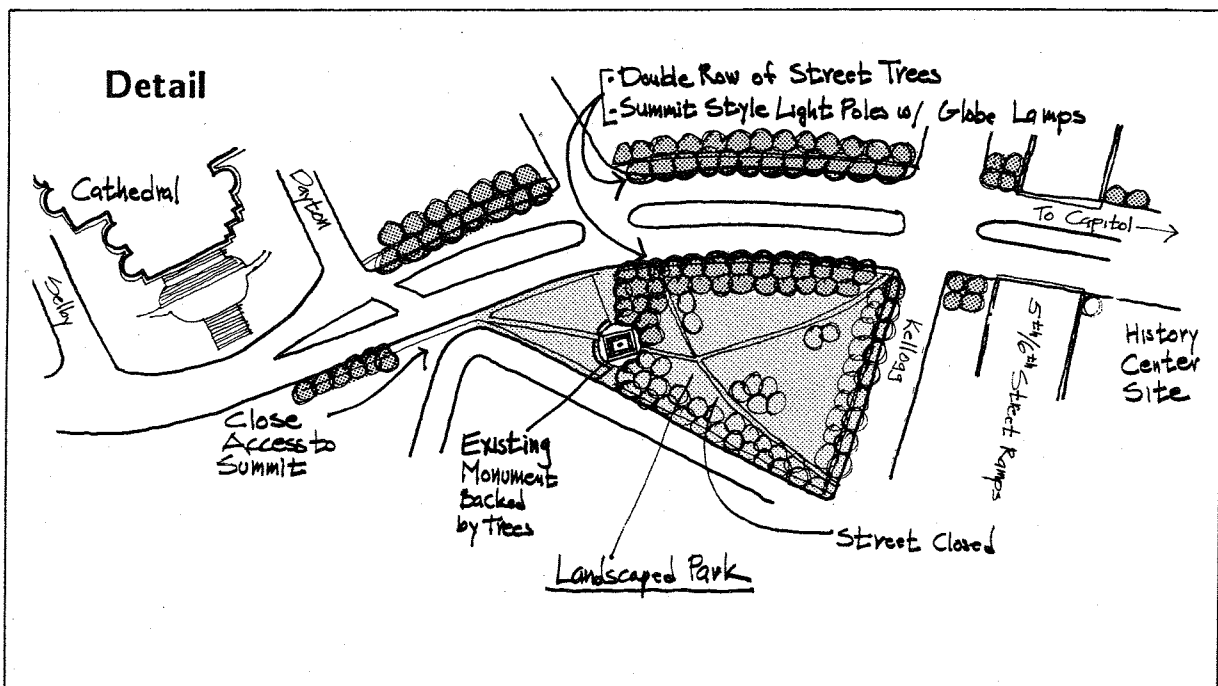
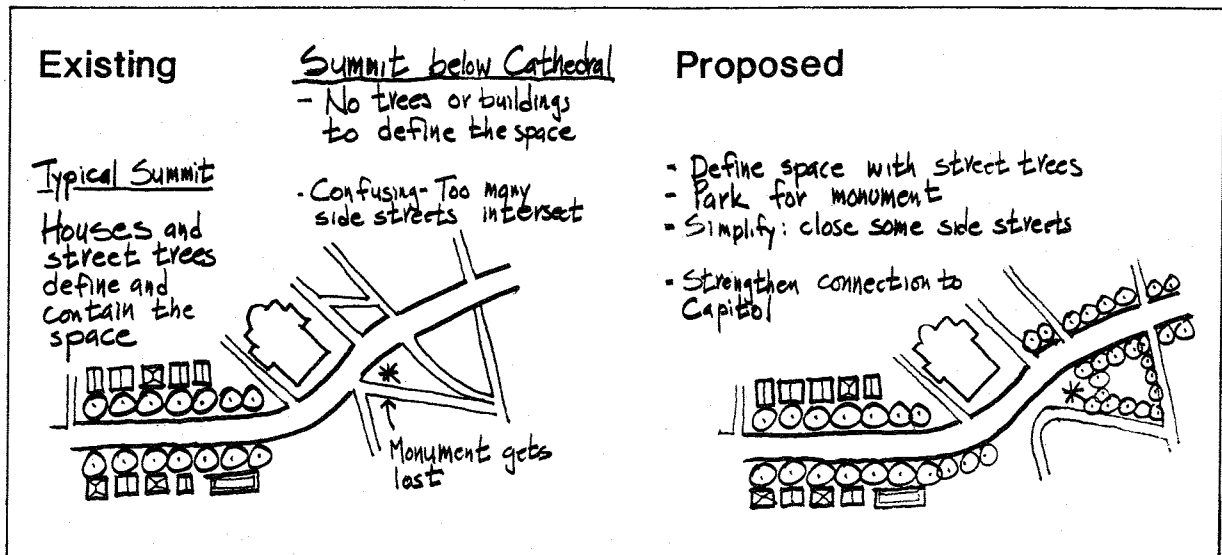
27. Redesign Mississippi River Boulevard connection. Parks and Recreation should use scheduled improvements on Mississippi River Boulevard to strengthen the west end of Summit Avenue.

The City is implementing a plan to upgrade Mississippi River Boulevard. The improvements are being staged from the south toward the north and will reach Summit Avenue in 1986 or 1987. The area where it meets Summit Avenue should be designed to capitalize on the dramatic views and to integrate the formality of Summit with the informal, natural character of the River Boulevard. The traffic turn-around should be removed or redesigned so that Summit will not end in a parking lot as it does now.

Mississippi River Boulevard Connection

The west end of Summit where it meets the Mississippi River. Improvements are planned here as part of the work on Mississippi River Boulevard.





John Ireland Boulevard Connection

Summit Avenue fades out as it approaches the freeway. Improvements are proposed for this area in connection with the Pleasant Avenue Parkway. Plans call for street trees, new lighting and closing some side streets to strengthen the perceived link between Summit Avenue and the Capitol.

28. Redesign John Ireland Boulevard connection. The City should use scheduled improvements connected with development of the Pleasant Avenue Parkway to improve the east end of Summit.

At the Cathedral end of Summit Avenue improvements are possible due to the development of the Pleasant Avenue Parkway. This area will also be the site of the new home of the Minnesota Historical Society. There is an opportunity to strengthen Summit where it now fades out toward the freeway. This space contains a monument to veterans of the Civil War. John Ireland Boulevard should be made a formal and tree-lined connection from Summit Avenue to the Capitol. Also, the stairs aligned with Walnut Street from Summit down to the new parkway by the Hill Mansion should be rebuilt.

29. Replace deteriorated tile sidewalks.

Public Works should replace the tile sidewalks on lower Summit Avenue east of Dale over the next four years. The new sidewalks should be poured concrete scored in a two foot square pattern to resemble the old tiles. They should be the same width as the existing sidewalks. The normal assessment policy should be used for the basic sidewalk with the City and the property owner each paying half the cost. However, the City should pay all the cost of scoring the sidewalk.

The tile sidewalks on lower Summit are in poor condition and need to be improved. Despite their condition they are unique and many people wish they could be saved. The sidewalks are made of individually laid concrete tiles and are nine to ten feet wide. Work has been held up so far because of disagreements over whether they should be replaced or repaired, how wide the sidewalks should be, and who should pay for the extra costs involved.

An architect on the Summit Avenue Planning Committee took great pains to repair the tile sidewalk in front of his house several years ago. Now the sidewalk is broken up again. He concluded that the 100 year old sidewalk tiles are reaching the end of their structural integrity.

30. Enforce speed limits. The Police Department should set up speed traps on Summit Avenue on a regular basis to discourage speeding.

Traffic speed was one of the most commonly mentioned concerns at the public hearing held by the Summit Avenue Planning Committee. Cars on Summit Avenue commonly travel at 40 miles per hour or faster. This is clearly unsafe on a street that is primarily residential.

Periodic speed traps are the most effective way to control speeding. Alternative methods for slowing traffic such as added stop signs were considered ineffective by traffic engineers in Public Works.

31. Remove lane stripes west of Lexington to improve bicycle safety. The lane stripes on Summit Avenue west of Lexington (the portion with planted medians) create two narrow lanes of traffic in each direction, leaving inadequate room for bicyclists. Public Works should not repaint the lane stripes. In two years they should observe the condition of the stripes and decide whether the stripes are wearing out on their own or need to be removed.

Lane stripes are not appropriate for Summit Avenue west of Lexington except at signalized intersections where they provide turning lanes. Each half of the divided roadway is 28 feet wide. The lane stripes create two lanes of traffic in each direction. This has made bicycling more dangerous since two lanes of traffic combined with a parking lane leave little room for cyclists who do not want to mix with cars in the right-hand lane. The marked passing lane may also make it easier for motorists to speed.

Removal of the lane stripes could be a problem because they were applied with epoxy paint. Normally epoxy paint must be removed from the roadway by grinding it off. However, in certain areas on Summit the lines are not adhering well to the road. Therefore, Public Works should wait and see how the stripes wear rather than removing them immediately. In the mean time, the stripes should not be repainted.

32. Avoid davit arm traffic signals. Public Works should use davit arms for traffic lights on Summit Avenue only if less obtrusive alternatives are clearly inadequate for safety.

Davit arms, which are used to extend traffic lights out over the roadway for better visibility, are currently used on Summit at Snelling and at Selby. The use of this type of fixture at additional intersections would clutter the view down Summit.

Victoria and Dale Streets have had accident problems and Public Works wants to keep its options open if there is a need for more control at these intersections. Davit arms should be used only if there is no other feasible alternative. If they are needed, "mini" davits with five foot long arms should be used.

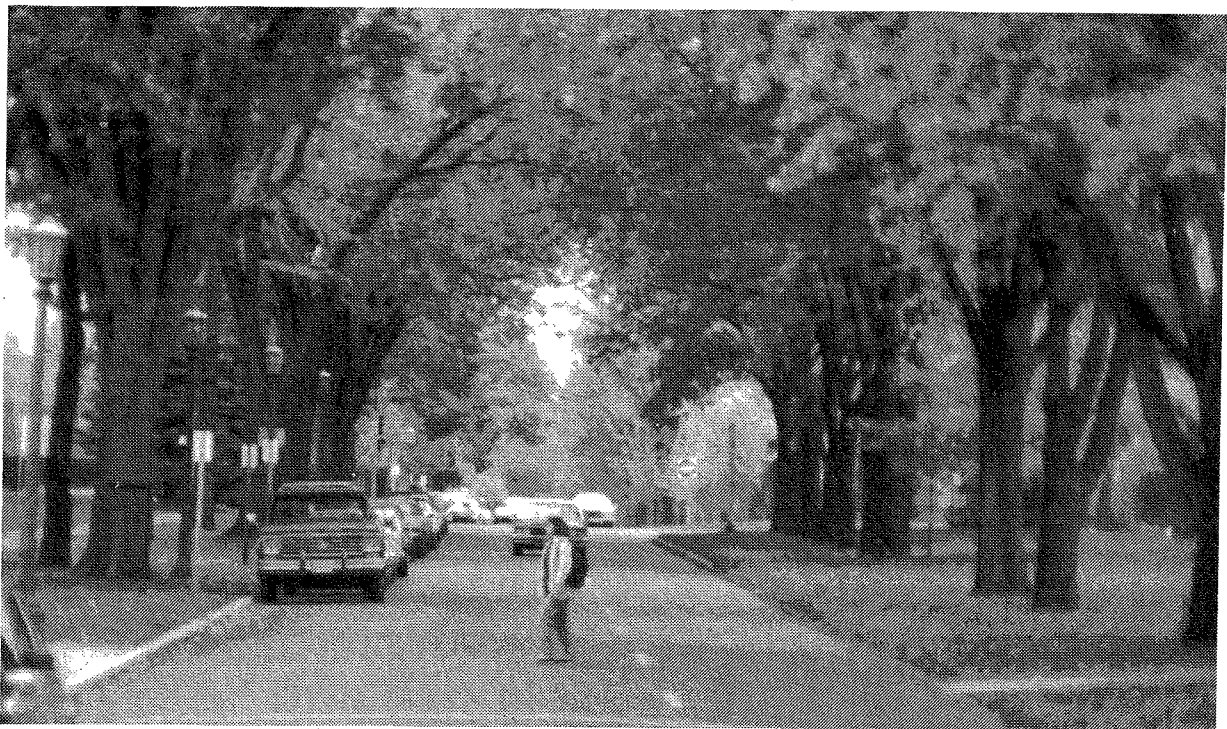
Public Works does not foresee the need for installing davit arms on Summit west of Lexington where there is the median.

33. Explore natural looking street lighting. As lighting technology advances, Public Works should give consideration to reconverting Summit street lights to a more natural looking light source.

If an economical, energy efficient light source is developed which gives a more natural light than the present high pressure sodium lamps, Summit Avenue should be given a priority for their use because of its role as a city landmark.

34. Work toward an integrated parkway network. Summit Avenue should be viewed as a part of a larger citywide system of parkways.

In addition to strengthening connections to Mississippi River Boulevard and the Pleasant Avenue Parkway, long term planning should strengthen Summit Avenue's connections to Como Park on the north and Crosby Farms on the south via Lexington Parkway and should strengthen connections to the parkways on the east side of St. Paul via John Ireland Boulevard.



Although many parts of Summit Avenue have lost their mature trees, this section in front of St. Thomas College has retained its canopy of trees. (PED)

ORGANIZATION

Implementation of the recommendations in this report will require coordinated action by many people over several years. When the Summit Avenue Planning Committee discussed organization, there was a striking contrast in viewpoints. The City staff thought the problem was that the citizens were badly organized to deal with Summit Avenue since six district and community councils have parts of Summit Avenue. The citizens thought that the City government was badly organized to deal with Summit Avenue since nine City departments and divisions have major responsibilities for the well-being of Summit Avenue.

Organization Policies

35. City staff network. To coordinate activities along Summit Avenue, a network of City staff from several departments should be established. The following City functions should be included:

- a. Planning Division
- b. Parks Design Section
- c. City Forestry
- d. Housing and Building Code Enforcement (Zoning Code Enforcement)
- e. Fire Department (Fire and Certificate of Occupancy Inspection)

- f. Public Health Division (Housing Code Enforcement)
- g. Public Works Department (Traffic and Sidewalks)
- h. Police (Traffic and Parking Enforcement)
- i. Heritage Preservation Commission

The purpose of the network is to assign responsibility for plan implementation steps and to facilitate coordination. Since the Planning Division currently feels the most "ownership" of the plan, it should play the lead role in the network for the first year. The Deputy Director for Planning should assign a staff person to establish the network, hold a plan orientation meeting, and monitor plan implementation during the first year. Coordination would take place as necessary over the phone and in smaller meetings of the department staff directly involved.

36. Exploration of citizen organization. Members of the Summit Avenue Planning Committee should draft a questionnaire about the desirability of a Summit Avenue organization to be enclosed with the notice of the public hearing the Planning Commission will hold on this plan.

Six district and community councils share Summit Avenue as a boundary street. Four City Council wards include parts of the Avenue. There is no organized group serving as an advocate for Summit Avenue as a whole. The planning committee is uncertain whether such an organization is needed, what its role would be, or whether it could become self-sustaining. The answers should be sought through a questionnaire sent to Summit Avenue residents.

The mission of a citizen organization might be any of the following: to sponsor the historic district proposals; to serve as "watchdog" for the Avenue; to lobby on zoning or capital improvement items; to initiate improvement projects; to monitor implementation of this plan; to use peer pressure for design and maintenance standards; or to encourage social interaction (e.g., a Summit Avenue progressive dinner).

An organization might take the form of a "Summit Avenue Coalition," of existing community organizations, a "Summit Avenue Homeowners Association," or a "Summit Avenue Trust" which could include members from surrounding neighborhoods and ex-residents of the Avenue. The organization would not seek official recognition or funding from the City, but would become a constituency for Summit Avenue issues. The organization would also be consulted by the City staff network proposed in the previous recommendation.

37. Support college/community relations committees. To promote better communications between college and community, committees have been established at St. Thomas and Macalester College made up of representatives of the college and the surrounding neighborhood who meet regularly to discuss problems of mutual concern. These committees should be continued and one should be established at William Mitchell College of Law.

Increasing enrollment at St. Thomas and plans for a new parking lot at William Mitchell have strained relations between the colleges and surrounding neighborhoods. To find acceptable solutions to these problems, communications must be open. St. Thomas College and area residents formed a committee to discuss problems three years ago. Although many problems still remain, the committee has helped the situation. It developed a program for dealing with parking, which is reflected in the recommendations of the College Zoning Study. It has also provided a forum for discussing rumors that circulate in the neighborhood.

ACTION PLAN

Action

Responsible Organization

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1. Expand Historic Hill Preservation District
2. Create new West Summit Preservation District
3. Determine if some buildings in proposed West Summit District should be designated as individual historic sites
4. Develop local alternatives to statewide fire code for historic homes

Heritage Preservation Commission
Heritage Preservation Commission
Heritage Preservation Commission
Heritage Preservation Commission
City Fire Marshal

HOUSING

5. Prevent expansion of commercial/institutional uses in residential structures
6. Permit accessory apartments and carriage house units
7. Strengthen enforcement of nonconforming use provisions
8. Add negative intent statement to Zoning Code
9. Permit bed and breakfasts
10. Permit expanded home occupations
11. Housing inspection to ensure maintenance is done
12. Monitor individual properties

Housing & Building Code
Enforcement
Fire Department (Certificate of
Occupancy Program)
Planning Division
Planning Commission
City Council

Planning Division*
Planning Commission
City Council

Fire Department (Certificate of
Occupancy Program)*
Housing and Building Code
Enforcement
Planning Division
Planning Commission

Planning Division*
Planning Commission
City Council

Planning Division*
Planning Commission
City Council
City Council
License Division

Planning Division*
Planning Commission
City Council
Housing and Building Code
Enforcement

Public Health Department

Planning Division*
Housing and Building Code
Enforcement
Fire Department (Certificate of
Occupancy Program)
Public Health Department
Summit Avenue Residents

Action

Responsible Organization

INSTITUTIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 13. Strict enforcement of nonconforming and similar use provisions in Zoning Code | Housing & Building Code Enforcement*
Fire Department (Certificate of Occupancy Program)
Planning Division
Planning Commission |
| 14. Monitor St. Thomas Parking | St. Thomas*
Joint Committee on Community/College Relations
Community Councils
Planning Division
Planning Commission |
| 15. Planned expansion of St. Thomas balanced by neighborhood protection | St. Thomas*
Joint Committee on Community/College Relations
Community Councils
Planning Division
Planning Commission
Housing and Building Code Enforcement
Mayor
City Council |
| 16. Establish college building height limit | Planning Division*
Planning Commission
City Council |
| 17. Grant permits for William Mitchell parking lot | District 8
District 16
Planning Division
Planning Commission
City Council |
| 18. Develop parking lot design guidelines | Planning Division |
| 19. Manage University Club parking | University Club*
Ramsey Hill Association
Summit Hill Association |
| 20. Control University Club office space conversion | University Club*
Housing and Building Code Enforcement
Planning Division |
| 21. Manage Hill Museum parking | Hill Museum*
Archdiocese of St. Paul & Mpls.
Ramsey Hill Association |
| 22. Preserve Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House | State Historical Society*
Planning Division |

Action

Responsible Organization

PARKWAY

- | | |
|---|---|
| 23. Review current landscape plan for Summit Avenue | Parks & Recreation*
Community Councils |
| 24. Speed up street tree planting | Community Councils*
Property owners
City Forester |
| 25. Schedule extra tree trimming | Community Councils*
City Forester
City Council |
| 26. Improve the Short Line Bridge area | Parks & Recreation
Public Works |
| 27. Redesign the connection of Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Blvd. | Parks & Recreation*
Public Works
Community Councils |
| 28. Redesign the John Ireland connection and rebuild stairway near Hill House | Parks & Recreation
Public Works |
| 29. Replace deteriorated tile sidewalks on Summit east of Dale | Public Works |
| 30. Enforce speed limit | Police Department |
| 31. Remove lane stripes from Summit west of Lexington | Public Works |
| 32. Consider alternatives to davit arm traffic lights | Public Works |
| 33. Consider natural looking lighting for street lamps | Public Works |
| 34. Integrate Summit with parkway system | Parks & Recreation |

ORGANIZATION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 35. Develop city staff network for Summit Avenue | Planning Division |
| 36. Explore idea of a Summit Avenue Citizen's Organization | Summit Avenue Planning
Committee members
Community Councils
Area Residents |
| 37. Support college/community relations committees
District Councils | Summit Avenue colleges
District Councils |

*Indicates organization with primary responsibility

APPENDIX A LAND USE TRENDS

Number of Buildings by Number of Dwelling Units 1985, 1974, 1962

Selby to Western

	Number of Units							
	1	2	3	4	5-8	9+*	NonRes*	Total*
1985	3	4	7	4	7	5(5)	8(6)	38(36)
1974	7	4	0	2	5	9(9)	8(6)	35(33)
1962	5	6	1	1	5	6(6)	13(10)	37(34)

Western to Grotto

	Number of Units							
	1	2	3	4	5-8	9+*	NonRes*	Total*
1985	22	12	7	5	6	10(2)	4(2)	66(56)
1974	23	11	3	6	7	11(3)	4(4)	65(57)
1962	21	10	3	5	8	10(3)	4(1)	61(51)

Grotto to Lexington

	Number of Units							
	1	2	3	4	5-8	9+*	NonRes*	Total*
1985	30	16	1	1	1	0	8(2)	57(51)
1974	33	14	0	0	1	0	7(2)	55(50)
1962	38	12	1	0	1	0	7(2)	59(54)

Lexington to Snelling

	Number of Units							
	1	2	3	4	5-8	9+*	NonRes*	Total*
1985	73	17	0	1	0	2(2)	5(1)	98(94)
1974	71	18	0	0	0	3(3)	7(3)	99(95)
1962	71	19	0	0	1	2(2)	7(3)	100(96)

Snelling to Mississippi River Boulevard

	Number of Units							
	1	2	3	4	5-8	9+*	NonRes*	Total*
1985	117	12	0	0	0	0	5(2)	134(131)
1974	116	13	1	0	0	0	10(3)	140(133)
1962	115	12	2	0	0	0	9(2)	138(131)

Total

	Number of Units							
	1	2	3	4	5-8	9+*	NonRes*	Total*
1985	245	61	15	11	14	17(9)	30(13)	393(368)
1974	250	60	4	8	13	23(15)	36(18)	394(368)
1962	250	59	7	6	15	18(11)	40(18)	395(366)

*The first number in this column gives the total number of buildings. The second number (in parentheses) gives the number of buildings built as houses and does not include apartment buildings, churches, office buildings, and school buildings.

Source: St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, 1985

CREDITS

The development of the Summit Avenue Plan has been the responsibility of the Summit Avenue Planning Committee. The committee is composed of representatives from organizations which share an interest in Summit Avenue. It is chaired by a member of the St. Paul Planning Commission and staffed by the St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development. The committee began work on the plan in May of 1985.

SUMMIT AVENUE PLANNING COMMITTEE

St. Paul Planning Commission

Joseph F. Levy, Chair
Nancy Tracy
Kathy Ziemann

St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission

Gary Reetz

Summit-University Planning Council (District 8)

Michelle Hotzler
Alma Joseph
John Loban
Chris Owens

Ramsey Hill Association

Maria Girsch
Maureen Novak
Kit Richardson
Charles Skrief

Merriam Park Community Council (District 13)

John Sonnen

Snelling-Hamline Community Council (District 13)

George Mori

District 14 Community Council

Mike Fahey
Steven Kluz
Dennis Osborn

Summit Hill Association (District 16)

Judy Bigelow
Bob Casselman
Nancy Downey
Peggy Lindoo

William Mitchell College of Law

Angelo Gentile

College of St. Thomas

James Reidy

STAFF

Administration and Policy Direction

James J. Bellus, Director
Peggy A. Reichert, Deputy Director for Planning

Planning and Research

Lawrence Soderholm, Principal Planner
Tom Beach, Planning Aide
Nels Sandberg, Planning Intern

Graphics

Tom Ashworth

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Some of the photographs used in this plan and much of the information for the chapter on Historic Preservation were taken from the book St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue by Ernest R. Sandeen.